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ABSTRACT

Twelve papers focus on post-school provision for mentally handicapped young people and adults in Great Britain. The following papers are presented: "Educational Opportunities for People with Severe Learning Difficulties" (S. Hegarty); "Further Education Provision for Students with Severe Learning Difficulties--Analysis of Survey Findings" (A. Dean); "Social Education Unit" (J. Varley); "South East London College Provision for Students with Severe Learning Difficulties" (J. Wilson); "Cheshire Provision for Post-16 Mentally Handicapped People" (E. Barnett); "Provision in Special Schools" (S. Hegarty); "Adult Education Provision for Mentally Handicapped Students--Analysis of Survey Findings" (A. Dean); "Southwark Adult Education Institute Provision for Mentally Handicapped Students" (C. Lloyd); "The Integration of Mentally Handicapped People into Adult Education" (P. Willis); "The Copewell Curriculum: Development, Content and Use" (E. Whelan, B. Speake, and T. Strickland); "Educational Television for Mentally Handicapped People: The Impact of 'Let's Go'" (F. Heddell and R. Lee); and "Learning for Independence: An Overview" (S. Hegarty and A. Dean). (CL)

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LEARNING FOR INDEPENDENCE:

Post-16 Educational Provision for People with Severe Learning Difficulties

edited by

Alan Dean
and
Seamus Hegarty

October 1984

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Dear Sir/Madam

LEARNING FOR INDEPENDENCE

Enclosed is a selection of papers concerned with post-school provision in the education sector for mentally handicapped young people and adults - that is, those with severe learning difficulties. It is the outcome of an FEU project undertaken by NFER, and includes reports on two surveys of provision (in further education and in adult education), as well as accounts of work in progress by practitioners.

The surveys reveal that only a small minority of colleges and adult education institutes make provision for this group. Colleges and their staff are unsure, uneasy and sometimes fearful about involving themselves with mentally handicapped people, few of whom will obtain employment. In publishing this document, the FEU is, once again, attempting to increase the sensitivity of the FE system to its community role, by illustrating not only the scale of neglect but also the pioneering work that does exist in the system.

The concluding overview by Seamus Hegarty and Alan Dean highlights problems and possibilities: there is a lack of collaboration on curriculum development; few opportunities to test and evaluate; and a tendency of isolationism. On the other hand many of the contributions obviously support the concept of integration, which appears to be enriched when students with severe learning difficulties are given the status of learners.

The institutions, represented in the case studies - an Institute of HE, further education colleges, and adult education institutes - all report significant learning achievements among the students. Moreover, the courses have not distorted or disturbed their host institutions, nor made excessive resourcing demands. While on-going staff development is certainly important for those working with these students, a range of mainstream lecturers have found it both possible, and rewarding, to be involved. The message is an optimistic one.

As a follow-up to this study and to provide a focus for collaborative curriculum development, FEU is supporting a project to develop a curriculum framework for students with severe learning difficulties. The framework will initially be developed in the Special Needs Units in Devon and Somerset before being tested both there and in other LEAs and institutions. Anyone wishing to be involved with this project (RP221) should write to FEU, mentioning this letter.

Meanwhile, we hope that the positive nature of these collected papers will encourage other institutions to initiate provision for this student group.

Yours faithfully

Jack Mansell

JACK MANSELL
Chief Officer

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Special thanks go to Hilary Hosier who, in ways too numerous to mention, held the whole project together and to Jane Pagett who tied it all up at the end.

Alan Dean
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Preface

This report arose from a recognition by the FEU Special Needs Study Group that there was little available information about the extent and nature of provision for students with severe learning difficulties within further and adult education. NFER undertook to survey this area, and to commission papers which would detail examples of current practice and discuss significant issues. The result is this interesting collection.

As Seamus Hegarty says, 'the target group can be defined in terms of leavers from ESN(S) schools and their equivalents in the adult population'. Since this group is one with which many further and adult education institutions will still be unfamiliar, a brief, and necessarily generalised, description may be useful.

During the last few years, many different terms have been used to describe the group of children and young people who in the 1981 Education Act are said to have severe learning difficulties. This group is largely the same as those who have been described as Educationally Subnormal (Severe) (ESN(S)) and those whom the population at large would know as mentally handicapped. It has always been accepted that the majority will not be able to gain open employment and most will need a high degree of help and support throughout their lives.

Like so many general definitions this one does not begin to describe the enormous range of individual handicaps likely to be encountered, or indeed the fact that many of these students will suffer from several disabling conditions resulting from genetic factors, illness, trauma, or even social factors like malnutrition.

Many will also have to cope with additional difficulties like physical handicaps, sensory handicaps and epilepsy. As a result they are profoundly handicapped and need a high degree of support in all aspects of their daily lives.

Traditionally, identification has been carried out by psychologists and in IQ terms the group would be all those people who produced results of less than 50 in the standard tests. Fortunately the limitations of the IQ tests have been recognised and since the 1981 Act children are placed into schools appropriate for their curricular needs rather than solely according to their handicap.

There are about 160,000 people with severe mental handicaps in Britain today and the group represents between 0.3% and 0.4% of the overall population.

Most young people with severe learning difficulties have grown up in the protected and restricted environment of a small special school. These schools usually cater for children of all ages and provide a curriculum which is based on the need to develop social independence as well as a limited version of the

more traditional 3Rs. The school leavers may well have attended the same school since they were 2 or 3 years old. Today's leavers will be among the first of this group to benefit from compulsory education throughout their childhood. Prior to 1971 they were excluded from the education system and simple training was provided by Local Health Authorities in Junior Training Centres.

The traditional post-school destination of most of these young people is the Adult Training Centre (ATC) run by the local authority Social Services Department. While, as the name suggests, one of the roles of ATCs is to prepare for outside employment, very few trainees do, in fact, leave to take up jobs. The Centres themselves vary considerably: they range from those which provide a sheltered workshop environment for a lifetime, often with many hours of simple and repetitive assembly work, to those which emphasise social education and independence training. In a few areas, new Social Education Centres (SECs) have been established, still under the auspices of Social Services. When contrasted with educational institutions, ATCs and SECs are poorly resourced for learning activities, although the commitment of the staff is often high. Recently, high levels of unemployment have exacerbated problems of overcrowding in ATCs, since more able special school leavers are seeking entry.

Adults with severe learning difficulties who are not in ATCs or in open employment are likely to be in establishments maintained by voluntary bodies, in long-stay hospitals, or simply unoccupied at home. Most qualify for Non Contributory Invalidity Pensions when they are 16 and this is often topped up by Social Security Benefits, and in some cases also by attendance and mobility allowances.

The experiences recounted in this volume attest to the fact that this group is well capable of benefiting from the extended educational opportunities to which they have a right. Most of the papers are concerned with innovative practice within further and adult education. It is important to emphasise, however, that much of the pioneering curriculum development has been carried out elsewhere. This is an area of work where we have much to learn from those ATCs and SECs which have concentrated on increasing educational opportunities, and from further educational establishments maintained by such bodies as the Rudolf Steiner Trust, the Spastics Society, and MENCAP. Detailed case studies from such institutions were beyond the remit of this report, but it would be incomplete without an acknowledgement of their achievements.

ROSEMARY LEE
FEU

1

Educational Opportunities for People with Severe Learning Difficulties

Seamus Hegarty

Most developed societies have subpopulations known collectively as the handicapped. These are people – children and adults – who fail at certain tasks deemed important by society. The tasks usually relate to educational and social performance. As a result, these people tend to live at the margins of society – poor, socially and culturally impoverished, with limited employment prospects and interpersonal relationships, and often assigned a minority status in law.

In recent years there has been a reaction against this state of affairs. Not only was it seen to be doing violence to the civil and human rights of individuals, but it was also based on outmoded and incorrect views of what these people were able to do. In particular, it implied an understanding of handicap as a static and enduring characteristic of the individual. The effect of physical and sensory impairments was seen in a deterministic way, setting specific limits to a person's potential achievement, while learning difficulties were assumed to have an organic basis.

The civil rights approach has been much influenced by developments in the USA. There the handicapped have been seen unambiguously as a minority who are discriminated against. The experience of blacks and others suffering discrimination had set the precedent for seeking remedies through courts of law and if necessary the legislature. There has in fact been a major legislative effort to minimise restrictions of every kind on the handicapped and to ensure them a place in the mainstream of society.

A major impetus for change in professionals' eyes has been the emergence of new insights on handicap and the abilities of handicapped people. So long as the notion of defect was paramount and they were seen as incapable of learning, education necessarily had low priority. A humanitarian philosophy might require concern for their material wellbeing, but developing academic skills and promoting independence could legitimately be given low priority. If on the other hand handicap is at least in part a social construct and created by the ways in which society deals with certain people, it is necessary to scrutinise segregated instututions and the other mechanisms by which society may act to 'create' handicap. If the abilities of handicapped people are greater than

commonly supposed, far greater attention must be paid to teaching them and devising appropriate curricula.

The notion of integration has been central to these concerns. As a symbolic statement and a rallying cry for action it has been a useful if much misunderstood objective. Integration in the sense of reinstating handicapped people in the mainstream of the community and as it were undoing their marginalisation is a desirable goal, but it is only half of the picture – if that. It is a goal which cannot be achieved without major changes in society and its institutions. Apart from the widespread attitudes which regard segregation as part of the natural order of things, there are many societal factors – relating to legislation, the provision of education and training, employment opportunities, housing and daily living arrangements – that bolster, if not actually require, the segregation of the handicapped. A concept of integration that fails to take account of these factors is not only incomplete but misguided, and action based on it is unlikely to be effective.

This concept of integration has important practical consequences. The target of change strategies must be not so much to integrate the handicapped in society but rather to remove the barriers that limit their participation in it. Handicapping conditions do not of themselves require that people should be segregated from the mainstream of life. The segregation comes from the way in which society deals with those who depart from the normal in certain ways. To this extent the aim must be to 'desegregate' society rather than to attempt to integrate the handicapped while leaving society unchanged. Structural features of society and attitudinal sets are unlikely to be affected significantly just by a greater visibility of the handicapped. If anything, the latter may have the effect of strengthening segregation. In order to bring about real change, direct action that tackles the root societal causes of segregation is essential.

An important determinant of individuals' degree of participation in society is the educational opportunities open to them. This is no less true of people with severe learning difficulties, who form the subject of this book, than it is of the Oxbridge and other elites for whom the phenomenon is regularly documented. Prior to 1971 these people were deemed ineducable in this country. In the words of Dybwad (1967), 'because they couldn't learn we naturally didn't teach them; because we didn't teach them, naturally they didn't learn'. With the passing of the Education Act 1970 all children regardless of the extent or severity of their learning difficulties became the responsibility of education authorities, who were charged with providing an appropriate education for them. The result has been a considerable expansion in the special school sector, documented for example by Mittler (1979), along with some curricular development (Leeming et al 1979).

Provision after school has developed more sporadically and less information is available on it. It has the greatest importance however since young people with severe learning difficulties learn more slowly than others and may exhibit different patterns of development. Many if not most will not be ready for

independent adult living at the normal school leaving age – and may not be for many years after that. The conclusion to be drawn from this however is not the traditional one that little can be done since independent living is a remote target, but rather that far more needs to be done precisely because existing efforts have left this target so remote.

This book is concerned with post-school provision in the education sector for young people and adults with severe learning difficulties. Specifically, it seeks to document developments in further education colleges and adult education institutes where efforts are being made to provide for this group. These efforts encompass basic educational attainments, work preparation, personal care, domestic and general coping skills, social skills and the use of leisure. The purpose of this provision is to further the personal development of people with severe learning difficulties and to enable them to take an independent place in the world.

There is first a report by Alan Dean on a survey of provision in the further education sector. Questionnaire responses identified 47 FE colleges as making some provision for students with severe learning difficulties, mostly through link courses with special schools but through various other means as well. This is followed by two descriptions of provision in colleges – John Varley writing from the North Wales Institute of Higher Education and Jenny Wilson from South East London Technical College. The range of provision made by one LEA is described in Eunice Barnett's paper on Cheshire.

These – and later – examples are presented in order to flesh out the survey data with accounts of actual provision. We believe that each example selected has interesting features but even their proponents would not claim that they have solved all the problems. They have been chosen to represent a range of approaches, and not every approach will win universal acceptance. This should not lessen their usefulness however since the purpose is to stimulate ideas on what is possible, not provide models for copying.

The modest growth in college provision is encouraging but it must be seen in perspective. Figures presented by Seamus Hegarty on special school enrolments suggest that the major trend in provision is toward staying on at school for two to three years beyond 16. It is only possible to speculate about the reasons for this trend, but it seems clear that it can be attributed to pragmatic rather than educational considerations.

The next part of the book is concerned with provision in adult education. Alan Dean reports on survey findings from the 27 institutes that were found to have relevant provision. This is followed by two accounts of practice. Chris Lloyd describes provision for mentally handicapped adults in the London Borough of Southwark where considerable resources have been committed to this area of work. Penny Willis reports on aspects of a research study looking at a project to integrate mentally handicapped people into adult education classes in two quite different settings.

What matters in the end is what is taught. A paper from Edward Whelan and his colleagues at the Hester Adrian Research Centre in Manchester describes a detailed curriculum for mentally handicapped individuals. This was developed initially, in an action research mode, for people attending adult training centres but it clearly has wider applicability. The Copewell Systera, as it is known, has in fact been used in both special schools and FE colleges. The System comprises: a curriculum divided into four sections – self-help, social academic, interpersonal and vocational; teaching packages; and assessment and recording materials. Fred Heddell and Rosemary Lee introduce a curriculum innovation of a different kind. Three series of television programmes for mentally handicapped young people and adults were transmitted by the BBC between 1978 and 1983. This paper describes the programmes, known collectively as *Let's Go*, and presents findings on their use and impact.

A final chapter discusses issues and implications arising from the provision described in the main body of the text, and draws atention to cruciai areas for growth.

It will be noted that the target group is referred to variously in terms of mental handicap, educational subnormality (ESN) and severe learning difficulties. This reflects the changing concepts referred tc above, differences in perception and language between the FE and adult education sectors, the usage of individual authors, but above all perhaps the problems of definition in this area. Mental handicap has been defined in a number of ways, usually based on criteria relating to social competence and intellectual functioning. The concept entails an essential relativity however on account of the operation of societal norms and demands. Behaviour or performance which is considered handicapped in one setting may not be considered handicapped in a different setting.

For present purposes the target group can be defined crudely in terms of leavers from ESN(S) schools and their equivalents in the adult population. This is unsatisfactory in many ways, not least because what is a significant limitation at school may be far less so in adult life, but it does serve to characterise the group to some extent. It also corresponds to the categories people have in mind when considering educational provision, which is the topic of this book.

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2

Further Education Provision for Students with Severe Learning Difficulties – Analysis of Survey Findings

Alan Dean

INTRODUCTION

This paper will report on the findings of the survey into current further education provision for students with severe learning difficulties (ie those previously termed ESN(S)). Little information was available concerning which colleges offer such provision, therefore initial enquiries had to be made to the local education authorities (LEAs). One hundred and eleven LEAs were contacted throughout England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Isles and requested to identify further education colleges with relevant provision. In addition they were also asked to provide statements of policy and procedures regarding the education of this group of students.

Of the 111 LEAs contacted only 36 responded with positive offers of help; 26 of these had suitable colleges. A further three stated that they were unwilling to provide assistance due to staff shortages. Follow-up telephone calls were made and some further information was obtained, mainly confirming that there was no provision. Because of the patchy nature of the poor LEA response other sources of information had to be explored. These additional sources were: nominations from informed individuals, entries in the MENCAP Directory of Courses and information collected during previous NFER special needs projects. By these means 158 colleges were identified as possibly having relevant provision. The subsequent responses are given in Table 1.

TABLE 1: College Responses

Completed returns from colleges making provision*	47
Confirmation of nil provision	65
No information provided	46
TOTAL	**158**

* Only those colleges running courses prior to September 1983 were included.

The questionnaire was constructed to provide information concerning:
organisation of provision (eg types and lengths of courses)
curriculum content
admissions criteria and procedures
extent of integration with main student body
use and availability of auxiliary staff
nature and extent of parental involvement
staff qualifications and experience
staff development procedures
use and availability of external specialist expertise

COURSE ORGANISATION AND CURRICULUM CONTENT

Provision for students with severe learning difficulties can be considered in terms of four different types of course: link, full-time, continuing education and outreach* . *Link* courses are part-time and are usually attended by students in their last year of special school (although some adult training centre (ATC) members attend in a few cases). *Full-time* courses usually last two years and are generally attended by students aged 16-20. *Continuing education* courses are a form of link course (in that they are part-time and take place within the college) normally attended by members of ATCs or hospitals. However they differ from link courses in that, in most cases, the educational component is more limited (ie more slanted towards leisure/recreation). *Outreach* courses are in some respects the inverse of continuing education courses. The scope and aims are similar, but the provision is made external to the college (ie in ATCs, hospitals, etc). The organisation and content of each of these four types of course will be discussed in this section.

Link Courses

Link courses are held in 34 colleges and run 2-6 hours per week for 35 weeks per year and from one to several years (ie some are essentially open-ended). The scope of these courses is extremely variable. Some may lead to attendance at a full-time course, whilst others may have no clearly defined end-point either in terms of time or student achievement. Link courses which lead on to a full-time course are used to assess the student's learning potential and, more importantly, to train the student to behave in a manner appropriate to a college environment. Those students who are successful, particularly in the latter respect, are subsequently admitted to a full-time course. Students who are not successful, or do not otherwise have the opportunity to attend a further course, enter an ATC, return home or, in a very few cases, gain sheltered employment. Open employment for this group appears to be non-existent at the present time.

The typical age range of link course attenders is 16-18 for special school students and 18+ for those from ATCs.

* In some cases these courses may also be attended by students with moderate learning difficulties

Although special schools and ATCs are the main suppliers of students to link courses other institutions are also involved. Students may also attend from sub-normality hospitals and hospitals catering for specific additional handicaps (such as deafness, epilepsy, etc).* In these cases the age-range of attendance tends to be as wide as that encountered with ATCs (ie 18+).

Expected outcomes for students tend to be poorly defined, though a concern for self-care and personal enjoyment rather than for formally defined educational goals predominates. Special school link courses may serve to prepare and select students for entry into a full-time course. Although basic numeracy and literacy are taught, the main aim is the preparation of students for full-time college life and the development of increased social independence. Improvements are made in terms of basic numeracy and literacy skills but, as open employment is not a realistic aim, these are only sought in terms of coping skills (eg use of timetables, shopping, etc). Staff hope that through attendance at these courses students will become more able to cope independently in the community.

Students' activities after attending a course follow no particular pattern. Colleges with both link and full-time courses do not necessarily combine attendance of one with attendance of the other, and colleges without full-time courses do not in all cases pass students on to ATCs or Social Education Centres (SECs). Some of these colleges will feed their link course students into courses provided by other local colleges.

The eventual fate of students attending link courses appears to be a complex mixture of chance and personal adaptability. Progress to a full-time course, for example, will not generally occur as a function of easily measured educational attainment, but will depend upon demonstrations of appropriate behaviour. Staff are more concerned with the development of personal 'independence' than achievement of given levels of literacy and numeracy.

As perhaps is to be expected there is little curriculum uniformity between colleges offering link courses. Provision may vary from two or three subject areas to complex multi-subject courses covering many areas. Multi-subject courses can best be considered in terms of three basic learning areas: academic, self-help and leisure. Academic components are almost solely those of basic numeracy and literacy. These are usually classroom-based with staff/student ratios of between 1:5 and 1:10. Teaching materials used are normally books, games, slides and other visual aids.

Self-care components are far more diverse in nature, although two main types can be recognised, ie those which involve the development of practical skills (such as cookery, home maintenance, etc) and those which focus on the development of social skills. The latter element will include components

* It should be noted that classification of a course as 'link' rather than 'continuing education' is problematic (and occasionally arbitrary). Link courses tend to have greater scope than continuing education courses, but the dividing line between is far from clear.

concerned with social competence (use of coffee bars, libraries, etc), self-awareness (focus on personal hygiene and appearance) and the development of inter-personal communication skills. The third category, leisure, is self-explanatory and assumes greater importance for this group than for non-handicapped students. Through the use of leisure facilities handicapped students can greatly improve motor co-ordination and, equally importantly, gain new opportunities for self-expression. An example of a link course structure is given below in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Example of Link Course Structure

Curriculum Components	*Teaching methods*	*Staffing/Student ratio*	*Materials*
Music		1 – 12	Improvisation Exercises in rhythm Simple composition Singing Listening to music Sound games, etc
Art & Craft		1 – 12	Batik Fabric printing Screen printing Leatherwork Painting Drawing Design Mask making Mobiles, etc
Home maintenance		1 – 12	
Cookery		2 – 12	Variety of menus
Drama		1 – 12	Creating plays Exercises designed to aid fine and gross motor skills Body awareness Group awareness
Literacy & Numberacy	Split group	2 – 12	Words, shapes, numbers, map reading, body awareness, group games and exercises, nature games,
Health		1 – 12	Diet, first aid, anatomy, health & hygiene, dental care, human growth and development

Full-time courses

Twenty colleges were identified as having full-time courses. The courses run between 30 and 35 hours per week for 36/38 weeks per year and normally for two years (although a few last for three years and one is open-ended). Student age limits for attendance are 16, at the earliest, to early 20s at the latest. However the most usual age range to be found is 16–19.

The aims and expectations held for students of these courses are not too dissimilar from those held for link courses. These are summarised by a member of staff in a Yorkshire college as being to develop 'self-confidence, independence, social awareness, and numeracy and literacy skills.' The emphasis on the development of confidence/independence stems once again from the realisation that firstly these students are severely limited in the academic sense, and secondly employment prospects are extremely poor (and perhaps non-existent at the present time). It is recognised that the students need primarily to acquire skills and behaviour which will enable them to enjoy greater participation in society.

After completion of full-time courses students, in most cases, go on to an ATC or SEC. Others return to long stay hospitals and a few gain open or sheltered employment.

Ten colleges incorporate a residential component into the course. These tend to last from 4–5 days and take place in a variety of settings. Some are held in outdoor pursuit/recreational centres in rural areas, whilst others may be housed in city-based hostels, and yet others involve trips abroad. Funding for this aspect of the course is provided from many different sources. Quite often college staff need to demonstrate a good deal of imagination and commitment before the necessary funds are raised. Parents are also often expected to make a contribution. In general the courses serve to provide students with an opportunity to enjoy outdoor leisure activities (eg walking, boating and climbing), to experience an approximation to independent living and to share equal responsibility for the 'success' of the group (full and equal participation in group decisions and activities is often denied in the home or ATC). Overall the residential component appears to reinforce and supplement many of the skills learnt during the college-based parts of the course.

The basic content of a typical full-time course is essentially the same as multi-subject link courses with emphasis on literacy/numeracy, self-care and leisure. However as more time is available each subject area can either be treated in more detail or contain a greater element of repetition-based training (important for these students). In addition, increased use can be made of the community as a teaching resource. An example of a full-time course is given in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Example of a Full-time Course

Curriculum components	*Teaching methods*	*Staffing/ Student ratio*	*Materials*
Social skills	Visits to restaurants, youth clubs, shops, friends' houses, theatres, cinema	1 – 4	Audio/visual aids, wall charts, worksheets
Numeracy	Classroom-based Community-based Individual and group tuition	1 – 4	Games worksheets The pools!
Communication	Classroom-based Discussion work Self-advocacy group Simulation games Telephone work Carrying/receiving messages Individual & Group work Basic literacy – library (use of)	1 – 4	Audio/visual aids, Project Worksheets Games
Needlecraft Woodwork Electricity	Group work-taken at individual pace Use of workshop	1 – 4	Tools and Machinery
Cookery	Mainly each individual cooking own lunch Occasionally a 'group' lunch is cooked	1 – 4	Use of catering section kitchen
Health & Safety	Classroom-based Mainly group work Residentials are a good opportunity to tackle hygiene but also approached during term	1 – 4	Audio/visual aids Worksheets Books
Music	Studio-based some singing mainly instrumental	1 – 7 and 1 – 16	Percussion Guitars Drums/kit Congas

Continuing Education Courses

Continuing education courses are perhaps the most diverse form of provision made for students with severe learning difficulties. In the simplest form these courses are merely single subject recreation classes in, for example, painting, pottery, cookery etc. However there are some which offer components in basic numeracy and literacy either in isolation or as part of a much broader syllabus. A course provided by a Nottinghamshire college illustrates this point well. Students attending the course have a programme tailored to their individual needs. The basic core of the course however relates to the development of self-help skills (e.g. cookery, hygiene, first aid, etc) and 'community awareness'. Basic education does not form a separate component of the course but is fully integrated into each subject area (and in total forms 40 per cent of the curriculum). This course lasts 5½ hours per week for 36 weeks and runs for two years.

Other continuing education courses differ from this to varying degrees. One college offers a course in typing and another in current affairs. Each course lasts two hours for 30 weeks and runs for one year. Another college in North London offers a social skills course of four hours per week for 32 weeks lasting one year, the aim here being to increase students' abilities to use community facilities more competently and confidently. A final example of this form of provision is that made by a Lancashire college, where courses are offered in painting, pottery, general craft, cookery and physical education. Each involves 26 weekly sessions lasting 1½ hours.

Outreach Courses

The most usual setting for outreach courses is an ATC, although hospitals, hostels/residential homes are also used. Outreach courses generally last from 2-6 hours for 36 weeks and from one to an indefinite number of years (some students may repeat the same course for many years). Courses are normally only in single subject areas, varying from those of a purely educational nature (eg basic literacy) to those more obviously leisure oriented (eg swimming). Colleges providing these courses will in most cases offer more than one course usually to more than one institution.

A college in Middlesex provides a good example of the diversity of outreach provision. Each year 17 ATC based courses are offered in dress (ie personal appearance), keep fit, needlework, hair and hygiene, reading, photography, art, special care, drama, therapy, athletics, cookery, projective art pottery, swimming and speech therapy. Each of these courses lasts 2-3 hours, 36 weeks and one year.

Although most outreach courses focus on a single subject and place emphasis on leisure/movement activities, there are examples of more broadly-based provision. A college in Norfolk, for example, holds an outreach course in a sub-normality hospital which has four main components: The World of

Work (getting and keeping a job), Independent Living (cooking, shopping, clearning and budgetting), Information and Communication (use of libraries, telephones – ie seeking and giving information), and Leisure and Recreation (choosing and developing hobbies and sports).

STUDENT SELECTION PROCEDURES

Of the four categories of course only full-time courses always involve college staff in selection procedures. With other courses college staff usually accept the recommendation/selection made by staff at the special school, ATC, or hospital.

For full-time courses the most usual pattern involves interviews with parents and students (either together or separately – this varies from college to college) to assess students' needs and to answer questions regarding the course. Discussions may also take place with, for example, special school staff or ATC staff, and in many cases college staff will attend case conferences at the feeder institutions. During these meetings detailed information regarding the prospective students' abilities will be available. Often students are able to visit the college and see the facilities available to them. Although these visits are essentially informal they do provide a further opportunity for staff to assess the behaviour and attitudes of prospective students, albeit in an extremely unstructured way.

Confidential reports covering academic, medical and social matters are frequently used in support of information gained during meetings with staff, parents and prospective students. These can be gained from a wide variety of sources, the most usual being the special school, careers officers, psychologists and social workers.

Other types of courses may use some of these selection methods in various combinations but it is extremely uncommon for, say, a link course to have as comprehensive a set of procedures as is the case for full-time courses. Most often, as was mentioned above, no procedures at all will be used by the college as feeder institutions' recommendations tend to predominate. There are, as one would expect, occasionally exceptions to this rule. One college, for example, employs a formal admissions panel comprising LEA, social services, special school, ATC and college representatives to select students for a link course.

INTEGRATION WITHIN THE COLLEGE

The integration of mentally handicapped students within the college they attend has, for the purpose of this report, three dimensions. The first relates to integration into mainstream classes, the second to classroom/unit proximity to the main college building, and the third to use of student common rooms and refectories. In this section each of these aspects will be discussed in turn.

Integration into mainstream classes

Of the 47 colleges that returned the questionnaire 15 integrate mentally handicapped students into mainstream classes. In the case of three of these colleges integration occurs in the opposite direction from that which would be expected: non-handicapped students attend handicapped students' courses to satisfy the requirements of General Certificate of Education Ordinary and Advanced Level or a 'pre-residential' care course, or the City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) Home Economics for Family and Community course. The remaining 12 colleges integrate mentally handicapped students into a wide variety of arts and handicraft classes. These include pottery, woodwork, sewing, physical education, television studies (the main focus is film making – the aim being to improve communication skills), typing and welding.

Accommodation

In all except two colleges, courses for mentally handicapped students are held in the main college building, or in an annexe no more than a few hundred yards distant, or involve a significant degree of integration into mainstream classes.

Although special education annexes are close to the main college it is difficult to comment on the degree of interaction which may take place between mentally handicapped students and the main student body. Proximity does not ensure that social exchange will take place (this point also applies with respect to courses held in the main college building). If no support is provided by college staff it is unlikely that mentally handicapped students will, of their own accord, make contact with non-handicapped students. A better guide to social (as opposed to academic) integration is the form and extent of use made of the main student common rooms and refectories.

Use of student social facilities

Students attending courses within, or near, the main college premises have normal unrestricted access to student common rooms and refectories. No special times are set down for handicapped students' use, although, initially at least, support is given by other students or college staff to enable an easy transition to be made to the busy rumpus of student life. Having spent many years in the relatively quiet, protective environment normally found in special schools or ATCs, mentally handicapped students may need support early in their college careers. Often it is other students rather than college staff who provide assistance.

In one college mentally handicapped students are accompanied at break times by their 'cousins' (partner students from a special care course), whilst in another the students' union organises many lunchtime activities and actively encourages mentally handicapped students' attendance. In addition to the

common room and refectories many other facilities are frequently available during normal break times. Students in some colleges are, for example, able to use language laboratories, audio-visual aids,or sports facilities during their lunch break.*

USE AND AVAILABILITY OF AUXILIARY STAFF

Twenty-four colleges make use of teaching assistants/auxiliaries. Of the remaining colleges, only six thought such help to be needed. Here the need was for extra staff to help with supervision during break times, toilet duties and travel and to undertake non-teaching duties in the classroom.

Eleven of the 24 colleges employing teaching auxiliaries have from 2-7 such assistants working from 30-32½ hours per week. The remaining 13 colleges employ from 1-6 staff for 3-28 hours per week. The former are generally considered to be full-time staff, whilst the latter are regarded as being employed on a part-time basis only.

Lecturers in four of the colleges employing part-time staff felt that extra help was needed (each of these four employed only one auxiliary), whilst those in five of the colleges employing full-time auxiliaries stated a similar need (in these cases up to seven assistants were already employed, with from 16-72 mentally handicapped students being catered for). Overall however requests for additional help do not directly correlate with auxiliary staff/student ratios. Other factors, such as course organisation, play an important part.

In general, both full-time and part-time staff serve a similar role within colleges. Essentially they oversee meal breaks, assist with classroom work, escort students to and from the college, and help with dressing and toileting.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Of the four types of special course provided for this group of students the greatest amount of parental involvement exists with respect to full-time courses. The least amount occurs with outreach provision, whilst link and continuing education courses lie in between.

Parental involvement with full-time courses has many forms. At the least it involves staff/parent meetings twice yearly, but in other cases contact can be quite extensive. Staff of an ILEA college for example invite parents to all social events and fund raising activities, hold twice yearly parents' and teachers' meetings, and run a parents' workshop (where outside speakers chair discussions on topics of interest to parents). In addition parents may also arrange individual meetings with tutors. Lecturers from a small number of

* While it may be doubtful that students with severe learning difficulties will gain academically from the use of language laboratories, they will gain from the demonstration of support and encouragement. These students are often subject to too many restrictions regarding the range of activities they are allowed to undertake.

colleges make visits to students' homes to discuss problems that may arise within the college, and to encourage contact between parents and tutors. Staff from a college show parents video recordings of student activity within the college. This approach is particularly useful to parents who work during the day and would therefore be unable to make visits to the college during the periods students attend.

Very little contact takes place between college staff and parents of students attending the other three types of course. Parents of students on link courses liaise mostly with staff of the feeder institution. In few cases have attempts been made to involve parents. This is partly justified as attendance at college only occupies a small part of the week, the remainder being spent at a special school, ATC or hospital. However in a number of cases link courses lead on to attendance at a full-time course. Therefore early involvement with college staff would be beneficial to all parties.

The parents of students attending continuing education courses have almost no contact at all with college staff. In one case termly meetings are held and in another parents occasionally stay at the college to assist teaching staff. No staff/parent contact was reported by the remaining colleges providing courses of this type. Regarding outreach provision, no contact takes place between parents and college staff.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCEE

Teaching staff involved in courses for students with severe learning difficulties have wide-ranging qualifications and experience. The majority are qualified teachers or graduates, and a large number have experience of teaching mentally handicapped people either in schools or colleges. Some have recognised qualifications in special education (eg City & Guilds 731, Teaching of the Handicapped in Further Education) but this is not a formal requirement.

Although the majority have a degree or teaching qualification many do not. Lecturers responsible for craft, creative or leisure classes often hold only craft, trade or similar qualifications. In these cases formal teaching or academic qualifications are replaced by many years of practical experience teaching students with special needs.

There is little difference to be found regarding staff qualifications and experience between the four different types of special course Outreach courses for example, are not staffed by less qualified lecturers than, say, link courses. A full-time course may require more staff than an outreach course but this is due to the larger scale of the former, rather than a channelling of resources away from the latter.

It is difficult to provide a summary of the wide range of staff qualifications and experience; therefore two examples of course staffing (one from a link and one from a full-time course) have been reproduced below in Tables 4 and 5.

These are not typical but they do show the range of skills and qualifications held by tutors working in this area. As has been said above, smaller courses will have fewer staff and less 'academic' classes will have less qualified staff.

TABLE 4: Qualifications of Link Course Staff

Grade	*Qualifications*	*Experience**
SL	B.A. Dip.Tec. Cert.Ed.	
SL	B.Sc.(Econ) Cert.Ed.	
L11	CGLI (Full Tech.Cert.) MASEE Cert.Ed. B.Ed.	
L11	B.Ed.	
L11	B.A. Cert.Ed.	
L11	CGLI (Full Tech.Cert.) Cert.Ed.	
L11	B.Mus. M.A. ARCM. Cert.Ed.	
L11	B.Sc. Cert.Ed.	
L11	Cert.Ed. Spec.Ed.	
L1	Cert.Ed.	
L1	NNEB. Cert.Ed. Spec.Ed.	
L1	B.Ed. PCRC	
L1	Cert.Ed.	

TABLE 5: Qualifications of Full-time Course Staff

Grade	*Qualifications*	*Experience*
Schoolteacher Scale 3	T.Cert.	4 years comprehensive school, 4 years ESN(S)
Schoolteacher Scale 2	T.Cert.	–
Schoolteacher Scale 1	T.Cert. B.Ed.	6 years comprehensive school 1 year ESN(S)
Technician	Time served carpenter	10 years ATC instructor 2 years department manager ATC 5 years teaching on link course
Associate Lecturer	T.Cert.	5 years teaching primary 3 years FE special school links
Lecturer 1	T.Cert.	6 years primary teaching 1½ years FE special links
Lecturer 1	B.S.(Hons) Communication Studies	3 years working with mentally handicapped adults

* The three course tutors have teaching experience in ESN(S) schools. The majority of other tutors have had teaching experience prior to their present situation teaching in comprehensive/-secondary schools (it should be noted that with the exception of the course tutors teaching staff supervise courses outside the area of special education).

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff development for the purposes of this survey has been classified into two main forms: that taking place within the college and that external to it. Each of these two forms will be discussed in turn in this section.

College-based staff development

Sixteen of the 47 responding colleges have no internal arrangements for staff development. For those colleges which do have such arrangements the most frequently occurring single method employed is that of the usually informal, staff meeting. These usually take place on a weekly basis but can be held as often as three times per week or as little as once per term. Some meetings have formal agenda (topics may include student assessment or parental involvement) but mostly they are the basis for general discussions regarding student progress. Some colleges, in addition to course team meetings, run internal courses or workshops where areas of interest to special education can be considered in greater depth. Often external speakers will be invited to lecture on specific topics. In one college staff development is organised through a support group or committee comprising social workers, FE advisers, an MSC representative, special school representatives and ATC representatives. In other cases liaison of this type will only take place with representatives from one external institution (eg ATC staff, health visitors). Overall however few attempts are made to involve external specialists in internal staff development programmes.

Three colleges run City and Guilds 731 courses which are routinely attended by special education staff.

Staff development external to the college

Lecturing staff from 24 of the 47 colleges identified as making provision are supported on external courses/seminars provided by a wide range of organisations. These include the Further Education Unit (FEU), the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU), MENCAP, the National Bureau for Handicapped Students (NBHS) and the British Institute for Mental Handicap (BIMH). In addition some LEAs and Regional Advisory Councils also organise conferences and working parties. Within the ILEA for example further education lecturers involved in special needs have organised a support group which meets regularly to discuss common problems and exchange ideas on educational matters.

USE OF EXTERNAL EXPERTISE

Eight professions or occupations were identified by the project team as having expertise which could be used in support of further education college lecturing staff. These eight were: educational psychologists, careers officers, social

workers, general practitioners, 'creative' professionals (eg dancers), psychiatric workers, adult education staff and staff of voluntary organisations. College staff were asked if the profession indicated was made use of within the context of courses for mentally handicapped students and if so, to provide a brief description of their role.

Educational Psychologists

Staff from 21 colleges have some contact with educational psychologists. In the case of five colleges use is made only on an individual student basis when personal problems arise. In another college educational psychologists are requested to assess the cognitive functioning of each student, and in two of the colleges they have an additional counselling role. In two other colleges psychologists take part in college selection procedures. In the remaining colleges psychologists are stated as having 'a general advisory role' – further details were not given.

Careers Officers

Direct contact with careers officers takes place in 25 colleges. In 10 colleges their primary role is the post-course placement of students. In four colleges careers officers often recommend students to lecturing staff as being suitable for a particular course. In a further four colleges careers service staff are closely involved with student progress monitoring procedures. Participation with college staff in student selection procedures takes place in four other colleges. Staff from seven colleges merely reported that careers staff offer 'support and advice'.

Social workers

Staff in 32 colleges liaise with social workers regarding this group of students. A formal role (such as membership of college committees) is held in only a few cases. Most often social workers act as intermediaries between parents and students, and college staff. Owing to the close links social workers have with students and their families they are often much better placed to offer assistance when personal problems arise.

General Practitioners

In nine colleges staff maintain contact with students' general practitioners. Staff in two of these colleges have regular contact (one for the purpose of maintaining student medical history records, and the other for up-to-date information on students' health), whilst the rest only consult with GPs when specific medical problems arise.

Creative Professionals

Creative professionals are employed in 16 colleges as, in the majority of cases, full-time or part-time teachers. In three colleges professional theatre or

dance companies are invited to perform for students and to involve them in dances, rehearsals and readings. The Royal Shakespeare Company and the Ballet Rambert have both had such links with special needs groups in two separate colleges.

Psychiatric Workers

Only five colleges noted contact with psychiatric workers. One college provides outreach courses in a hospital psychiatric unit, another has links with a community psychiatric team (no details given), whilst the remaining three did not specify the nature of their relationship.

Adult education staff

Staff in 15 colleges make use of, or direct students towards, adult education institutes. Four colleges use AEIs for adult literacy schemes, and a further three for leisure/recreation activities. Five colleges assist/advise students regarding the adult education provision in their area.

Voluntary Organisations

Contact is maintained with voluntary organisations in 17 colleges. Overall many diverse uses are made of these organisations by college staff. In some cases transport is provided, in others participation in fund- raising activities takes place. In a few cases staff merely recorded that 'general advice and support are available' – specific details were not given. Organisations providing assistance were named in only three cases. The Council for Voluntary Service has been successful in placing some mentally handicapped pupils on voluntary work programmes, and the NBHS has set up a London Regional Group as the basis for discussions on further education provision for mentally handicapped people. MENCAP was also mentioned as providing valuable support to staff in FE colleges.

Finally, speech therapists are used by four colleges, physiotherapists by two, occupational therapists by one, and clinical psychologists by three.

3

Social Education Unit

John Varley

INTRODUCTION

The North East Wales Institute of Higher Education is mainly concerned with technical and scientific pursuits, and during the last few years has acquired an international reputation for innovation and research. In keeping with this spirit of enquiry, it was decided in 1975 to provide further educational opportunities for students with learning difficulties. Clwyd, a county with a population of over 330 000 people, was at that time without further education provision for its young people who had been segregated and taught in special schools. The exercise was originally seen as an enquiry into the suitability of such an exercise, and was to be the subject of evaluation by the Institute, HM Inspectorate and other interested people/bodies. An application for 75 per cent funding was made to Urban Aid, and in 1978 the Social Education Unit opened its doors. The title of the unit indicates the prevailing theme of educational experience, and originally appeared to be suitable. With hindsight, a more neutral name, for example 'Further Education Unit', might have avoided subsequent labelling.

The Institute offers three years' further education for young people who have been educated in special schools for the ESN(S), ESN(M) and Deaf. A purpose-built building serves as the main centre of instruction and is the base from which students attend various college classes taught by the specialist lecturers. The major guiding principle is that all young people must have the same rights to further education and that the further education of youngsters with learning difficulties should be based upon the same general philosophies as those guiding the education of other students. At the end of the course, students should be more independent members of society, able to respond with some meaning to new and untried situations.

During their school days pupils attending special schools have been segregated from the mainstream and the models of social development which it provides. Increasingly this type of separate education has been questioned and it is assumed that one of the principal tasks of the Social Education Unit has been to examine the suitability of education within the more open environment of a large and internationally known centre of higher education. The college provides constant opportunities for meeting a wide range of students, and to a certain extent offers challenges of a novel nature.

The overall organisation of the unit rests upon a joint endeavour by specialist subject teachers and staff who work full-time within the unit. In addition to teaching within the unit, staff prepare lesson notes for the use of specialist teachers. Arrangements with college staff are flexible, and teachers provide servicing partly on a fixed regular basis and partly on availability. On balance, this unwritten agreement has worked to the benefit of both college and Social Education Unit, in so far as slack in lecturing hours is taken up and used to mutual advantage. Usually about 30 per cent of student time is spent attending sessions given by specialist teachers, but there are periods when this figure is exceeded.

Management has been guided by assumptions different in kind from those usually found in special education. Some of the assumptions, such as those about staff-student ratio, fly in the face of convention. Others question the separation of people into label-bearing categories. All assumptions purposely encourage the concept of a *new and fresh start unencumbered by past experience.* They have been made partly as evidence of the novel nature of the course, and partly to challenge some generally accepted traditions.

The following list seeks to provide guide-lines for the college, parents, students and any interested people.

1. Students with learning difficulties, like all other students, need to meet as great a range of people as possible and to live through common experiences. Hence the placing of the unit within a centre of education catering for a very large student population is highly desirable.

2. The idea of overt care and commitment to handicapped people must be abandoned and the concept of responsibility towards *all people*, irrespective of handicap, must predominate. Staff, parents and the college population (staff/students) must accept that SEU students should be treated along normal lines. Thus the accepted attitude that people with learning difficulties be regarded in a certain way is directly challenged.

3. Incipient failure has characterised past experience and therefore, by intention, no past records, medical or educational, are accepted. The Social Education Unit is seen as a completely new start. Parents must accept responsibility for obvious risks in placing their children in the open unshielded environment of a college containing over 3500 students and for disclosing medical facts they feel the staff should know.

4. Lecturers with no prior experience of young people with learning difficulties are capable of effectively and imaginatively teaching classes of such students within the limits of their specialist subjects.

5. Whatever numbers are accepted, the SEU College organisation must meet the demands for a place. High or low student/teacher ratios are not seen as either good or bad, but a phenomena to be managed. The prevailing assumption is that preparation for independence is impossible unless students can freely mix, with the absolute minimum of teacher interference, within a large peer group.

6. Students who have previously been largely educated along practical and prescriptive lines need more experience in theorising, in choosing and asking the right questions and in evaluating answers.

INTAKE

The purpose-built unit opened in 1978 with nine students and the intake has gradually increased to the present figure of 42 (20 males, 22 females) with an age range of 16 to 25 years. Seventy-eight students have been admitted since November 1978, 18 with severe and 55 with moderate learning difficulties.

Additional physical and sensory handicaps:	
Number on roll (September 1983)	42
Epileptics	12
Physically disabled	4
Tumours (brain, spine)	2
Deafness (partial)	3
Deafness (profound)	1
Unspecified (liver/skin ailments)	3

The number of students with additional handicaps has always been higher than anticipated, but all have attended college classes. No great difficulties have arisen in teaching these young people, and the necessary accommodation to circumstances has been easily made.

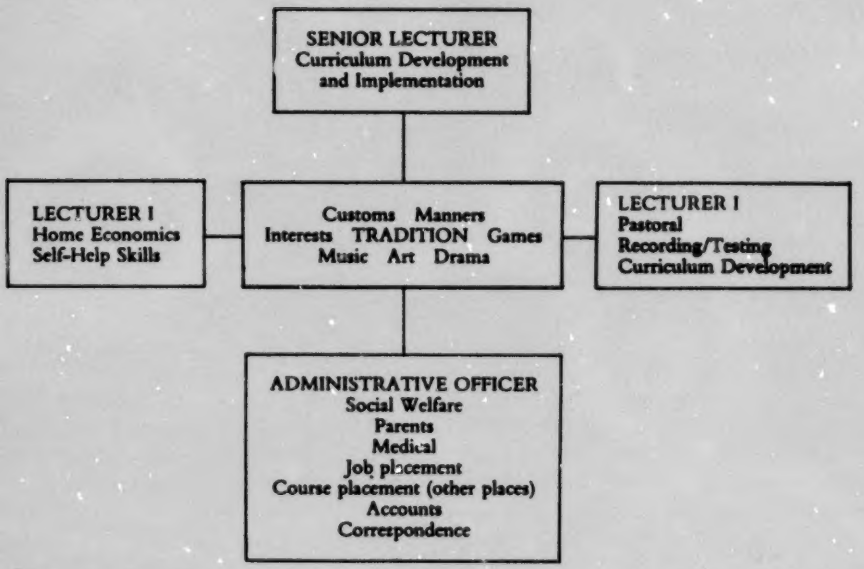
Thirty-six have left for other courses, jobs or adult training centres. The admissions policy is extremely flexible and is made as simple as possible, without an admissions panel and accompanying bureaucratic procedures. Parents hear about us and usually apply before the end of the last term in school. Other applications originate mainly through social workers and careers officers. Only three criteria are used for admission: (1) Applicants must come from schools for pupils with moderate or severe learning difficulties, those with severe difficulties having priority; (2) Potential students must be able to pay appropriate attention to their bodily needs; (3) They must for reasons of safety be able to understand the words 'Yes' and 'No'.

STAFFING

Senior Lecturer	M.Ed. (Wales)
Lecturer I	M.Ed. (Central State University Oklahoma)
Lecturer I	B.Ed. (Chester College of Education)
Administrative Officer/Welfare	NNEB (Manchester College of Nursery Training)

Most of the staff have had some experience of special education, but this is not seen as either a necessary or positive factor in the running of the unit.

Map of Staff Organisation



Lecturer I	Home Economics. Has her own province based within the purpose-built kitchen area of the unit and is entirely responsible for this essential aspect of educational experience. Teacher/student contact is direct and the course lasts one year. The lecturer chooses the composition of groups, and sets her own curriculum and objectives.
Lecturer I	Pastoral. Acts as personal tutor and meets all students individually at least once every week for a substantial period of time. Progress is monitored together with directions for any change in present implementation.
Senior Lecturer	Acts on advice from Lecturer I (pastoral) and is generally responsible for overall management and implementation.
Administrative/ Welfare Officer	Although responsible for all non-teaching duties, she helps when the occasion demands with any activity on hand. This officer plays an flexible role within the unit, and is entirely responsible for liaison work with outside authorities.

All staff join in promoting those activities loosely grouped around the concept of 'tradition'. They are also versed in the concept of the 'unwritten' or 'incidental' curriculum, and join in promoting acceptable standards of behaviour.

CURRICULUM

Difficulties in devising and evaluating any curriculum lie in the lack of a substantial base of knowledge and criticism from which ideas can spring. In keeping with the 'fresh start' philosophy of the unit and personally felt needs, our curriculum has been guided by the principles of literary criticism. For instance, principles of paradox (contradiction), metaphor (transfer), allegory (another type of transfer), characterisation (stamp) and interpretation, to mention but a few, are absolutely essential to the imaginative planning and direction of educational experience for any student body. For instance when evaluating a book or a piece of poetry we tend to look for ways in which ideas or descriptions are best conveyed to the reader or listener. Metaphor means change into something else, and it is a literary device for saying the same thing in a more vivid and arresting manner. In effect it is transfer, and as transfer is the central theme of any educational experience, it is essential that any aspect of the curriculum contains elements of metaphor. Paradox, or the sense of the absurd, occupies a vital place in cognitive development, and is built into teaching style and accompanying programmes aimed at getting people to think. These principles also add quality, depth and scope to the constant

evaluation that is part of educational experience. They are open-ended and capable of imaginative management by teachers in any situation. The framework thus provided offers a ready source of evaluation, is easily understood and seen to be central to all educational endeavour.

By express intention the curriculum is formative and – following the advice of the Red Queen to Alice that 'When you've said a thing, that fixes it, and you must take the consequences' – painstaking efforts have always been made to avoid a tied-to-a-plan approach.

There are six main strands within the curriculum:

1. college classes in woodwork, cookery, physical education, building, typing and home economics, all taught by specialist lecturers

2. generalised educational experience within the unit to improve and deepen existing skills such as reading, number, writing

3. generalised educational experience using skills already acquired in order to broaden knowledge and provide opportunities for 'using one's head', such as map-reading, games, puzzles/problems

4. fun experiences, most unwritten and almost entirely formative, in music, dancing, drama and art

5. incidental experience founded upon 'What is expected in a college of higher education', such as responsibility for behaviour and learning

6. cookery, hygiene, self-help skills taught by specialist teacher within unit.

Evaluation is terribly difficult. In a statistical form it fails to indicate change in those aspects of desirable behaviour which are not easily measured, such as the ability to look a person in the eye or to ask an intelligible question. Unfortunately, too, it is often impossible to know whether or not change could have occurred simply through maturation and other incidental factors. Change in teaching style and content may be evidence of partial evaluation and is virtually impossible to demonstrate in statistical form. In the end evaluation probably lies in the eye of the informed, disinterested spectator.

During the past five years the curriculum has remained formative, modified in the light of experience and constant evaluation. Students' success has not necessarily provided the yardstick against which teaching has been measured: present mastery does not always indicate teaching excellence. The risk of subjective evaluation is recognised, and in an effort to guard against this, all

teaching content and procedures have been recorded in writing or on audio-tape for others to see or hear.

These records have been made available to the wide range of visitors whose advice has influenced the curriculum. The staff are building an extensive library of tried teaching approaches together with explanatory literature available on demand for anyone who is interested. The tests used in the unit to measure change are the Goodenough-Harris Drawing Test (reflects accuracy of observation and development of conceptual thinking); Ravens Coloured Progressive Matrices (reasoning by analogy); Kent Emergency Scales (indicator of general knowledge); Boehm Test Basic Concepts (50 concepts cropping up at some time in practically every human transaction); the Vineland Social Maturity Scale (measures social competence); Wepman Auditory Discrimination Test (tests ability to recognise fine differences between phonemes); and Peabody Vocabulary Tests (examines a person's verbal intelligence).

While the more general and important aspects of change are recorded by using published tests, over 400 items of achievements are noted in records kept by students. (They are checked by staff for authenticity.) These cover such items as:
Can tell the time
Can make a decent cup of tea
Can tell you how to get from Mold to Wrexham
Can phone from an outside telephone box
Has helped other students to...
Can sing Calon Lan (Welsh traditional song).

INTEGRATION

There is a consensus among those involved that the students have adapted well. The sheer size and mechanical efficiency of the Institute have swept them up, and they have adapted easily and quickly to college life. Most students have achieved a far higher level of competence than expected.

Initially people expressed the fear that the unit might become a cellular structure, isolated and insulated from the rest of the college, and indeed a few students do return to the security of the unit for their free periods. The majority however have tended to spend more and more time in the main college, and it has not been necessary to prepare them formally for the outside world. It would not be correct to suggest that our students have integrated with the main student body. Such an aim would have been unrealistic. Perhaps 'accommodation to circumstances' would be a more apt description. Generally, lecturers have taken the tiny problems posed by the students in their stride and have enjoyed the experience. As expected, and in keeping with their professional role, they have done the job for which they are paid.

Friendly relationships with our fellow lecturers have eased any slight difficulties which have arisen, and we have learned together. Unobtrusively, the Social Education Unit has become as much a part of the college as any other section. Apparently unnoticed, our people pass unseen in the vast student concourse of the Institute, and are lost in the constant movement to and away from classes, canteen and so on.

During early days people seemed to regard the unit as a charitable concern and offers of help were many. Now the charity has long gone and students are treated like ordinary human beings and ignored. The comparatively large student roll has simply become an accepted fact and, as expected, has helped students to make their own traditions and organisations, virtually without staff interference. Our attitude, that whatever the level of intake the necessary accommodation must be made, is central to the philosophy and ensures a type of constant revolution to meet changing needs.

Without exception parents have welcomed the new approach based on the SEU, and no student has been removed through parental intervention. Parents have also accepted the assumptions guiding management of the unit. A booklet *Guide for Parents* has been written and contains both general and specific information so that college work and attitudes can be more readily understood.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

If students have benefitted from their time in college, it probably stems from the stimulation that occurs whenever something quite novel, yet compatible and challenging, is experienced. The idea that college demands a certain type of behaviour has been fully accepted, and the interesting feature is that this has come about almost totally without preparation. It is as if the fact of being in college creates its own special code of requirements, which although unspoken is nevertheless recognised and met.

Our puny efforts to instruct and improve upon previous attainments in reading, number and associated areas somehow fail to carry the same message to students. It is as if the organisation is stronger and more worthwhile than the content. We now have to work out the implications of this phenomenon and either find ways of capitalising on organisation, or tighten up on prescriptive teaching and perhaps more sharply define objectives. Indications are that the organisational rather than the objectives model is likely to influence future action.

Original assumptions depended upon some partial release from the tyranny of prescriptive teaching, with the express aim of motivating students to 'use their heads' in novel situations. With few exceptions little new ground has

been broken and the struggle to avoid that sense of false security and rectitude that stems from successful prescription has been constant but comparatively unrewarding.

The course is in the nature of an enquiry and we will continue to enquire in the future. Few answers have been obtained and few problems solved but, as indicated, changes have been made and new approaches taken. However, one important problem has to be faced – the future of the students once they have left the course. At the moment any radical breakout towards a fuller life for our students after college cannot be foreseen.

Ideally, after the general educational experience offered by the Social Education Unit, students should receive a more specialised course. A few students have been placed on such courses but up to quite recently places have been necessarily limited.

Most students have joined the course straight from school at the age of 16, thus following the conventional custom. Ideally, 18 years should be the age for entry as students need to do some 'growing up' before they can take full advantage of what the unit has to offer. The two years from 16 to 18, if not taken up by schooling, could be seen as an interim period in which young people would disentangle themselves from the regimen of the previous 11 years. While the ground might lie fallow, expectation of a guaranteed place in college at the age of 18 would provide a desired and definite objective.

Advances in computer assisted learning will be examined and assessed. Programmes based upon microcomputers and other machines offer scope for instructional reinforcement we have not met before. This, coupled with the motivation that appears to drive most people when managing a machine, will be investigated and used to improve standards of teaching. We are already planning to introduce microcomputers into the unit.

There is much to do. Although new and comparatively stimulating experiences have been presented, there is a need for more adventurous exercises in which students are placed in demanding situations requiring them to 'use their heads'. For instance, a series of experiences during which things go purposely wrong might fire initiative and would certainly require a level of response at present virtually untapped. Experiences of this kind have yet to be worked out. Exploration will continue, in keeping with the philosophy which has guided the venture over the past five years.

4

South East London College Provision for Students with Severe Learning Difficulties

Jenny Wilson

INTRODUCTION

In the Autumn term of 1978 South East London College (SELTEC) began the first course in the South East London area for school leavers from ESN(S) schools. For parents and teachers, and for the students themselves, there was an air of anticipation at the thought of educational provision being made in a large busy college rather than in a separate unit hived off from the world. What such integration would mean in practical terms was not known.

The college at the present time offers a one-year special school link course and a two-year full-time 'Further-on' course. Attendance at the link course usually, though not necessarily, leads on to attendance of the full-time course.

INTAKE

The intake to date is recruited from four local ESN(S) schools and more recently, due to falling rolls in these schools, from the lower ability end of ESN(M) schools. As a result of this development the course is becoming to be seen more as part of the total departmental provision for students with severe to moderate learning difficulties and not as a separate course exclusively for those with severe learning difficulties.

Whilst attending the link course students are carefully observed and an assessment is made of each student's communication and practical skills and their general level of competence and independence within the college. After an interview with parents and school representatives a decision is made as to whether a student should commence the full-time course. For those who are unsuccessful there is sufficient time for school staff to organise a link into an adult training centre (ATC).

The students' development is delayed as a result of one or a number of physical factors. These may be genetic abnormalities such as Downs Syndrome and microcephaly, enzyme deficiency such as phenylketonuria,

injurious births or disease resulting in brain injury. Some students may also have epilepsy, perceptual and/or motor handicaps.

STAFFING

There are, in total, 13 lecturers at SELTEC employed on courses for mentally handicapped students (however only three, the course tutors, are employed solely on special courses). They vary in grade from L1 to SL and in age from 27 to 50. Staff hold qualifications in a wide range of subjects but all are either graduates or qualified teachers. The three course tutors hold the Teaching of Infant, Nursery and Mentally Handicapped Children Certificate and have ESN(S) school teaching experience. The majority of the other tutors have previous teaching experience in comprehensive and secondary schools.

CURRICULUM

Course tutors contribute to the overall development and organisation of the curriculum. They are responsible for their own group's communication, numeracy, health and safety, and life skills programmes. They are also involved, in an advisory capacity, with specialist staff whose concern is the provision of workshops or leisure activities.

The full-time course comprises six components, namely: numeracy, communication skills, practical skills, cookery, health and safety, and recreation and leisure. The numeracy component of the course concentrates on the use of numbers in a functional way. This involves familiarisation with numbers relevant to the student's world (eg age, house number, time etc). Timetables or television programmes may be used to teach the concept of time. Students are expected to learn friends' telephone numbers, the numbers of buses, how to recognise prices of articles for sale and their clothing sizes. Constant references to numbers are made by all tutors involved in the course.

In communications work priority is given to the spoken word. Students are encouraged to be interested not only in themselves but in others, and to learn the art of conversation (both face-to-face and on the telephone). Students are encouraged to speak for themselves, to form and air opinions, to question and above all to make decisions regarding matters relating to themselves. Reading and writing skills are also covered. Where a student shows potential an individual programme of further reading and writing, using a vocabulary familiar and relevant to them personally, is implemented.

Practical activities are varied but in general concern the improvement of motor and hand-eye co-ordination through needlecraft (including the use of an electric sewing machine) and woodwork (involving use of hammers, saws and sometimes electric drills).

Planning, budgeting and buying are forerunners to the cookery session, which caters for a wide range of ability. For the most handicapped student making a sandwich unaided will be an achievement, but for the more able a snack involving the use of the cooker will be the goal.

A health and safety programme is followed by each student. Areas covered include safety in the home, basic first aid, hygiene, diet, emotions and some sex education.

Each student on the full-time course also follows a recreation programme. This comes in many guises and in any one week may involve basketball, yoga techniques, dance and football.

Each year most students attend a week's residential course at Churchtown Farm, an outdoor activities centre in Cornwall run by the Spastics Society. The centre offers an extensive range of outdoor pursuits (including rock-climbing, horse-riding and fishing) and has a comfortable, inviting, living environment. Prior to a student's attendance at the college parents are notified that the residential component is seen as an integral part of the course. Those who are unsure of the value of such activities are given the chance to discuss their reservations with the tutors. In practice all parents have been able to acccept this aspect of the course. During the course of the week staff are given a rare opportunity to observe each student through a full 24-hour period. The students are provided with opportunities and challenges which are at times impossible in an urban setting. As a result students often progress from being cautious to being daringly adventurous during the week. This can have far-reaching implications in terms of the development of their confidence upon their return to the college and the community at large. Much is done by tutors to capitalise on this experience.

INTEGRATION

Staff feel that through FE attendance students with severe learning difficulties develop social skills and knowledge which make the transition to adulthood easier than it would otherwise have been. In order that these developments occur it is felt important to place the curriculum in a societal context, and to engage the students in integrated activities within the college and the local community.

To introduce students to the community, shopping and travel expeditions are frequently made and meals are eaten in a variety of settings. Theatre, cinema and swimming trips are undertaken and the local community centre is utilised. Much welcomed interest has recently been shown at the centre regarding the provision of activities more related to handicapped people's needs.

There is growing involvement with the local Adult Training Centre and residential hospital, and with colleges in London that run similar courses,

particularly regarding the setting-up of self-advocacy groups (where the handicapped people decide for themselves what they wish to talk about and how best they can effect change and improve their personal situation). Inter-establishment sports activities are also a developing feature of the integration programme.

A recent trial work experience placement in a local hospital laundry is a further example of attempts to integrate students further into the community. With the support of the tutor and a member of the Adult Mental Handicap Team (organised by the Regional Health Authority and the Social Services) selected students attempted a number of tasks throughout one week under the guidance of the management. They were observed in the following areas:

relationships with other workers

ability to interpret and carry out instructions

punctuality

mood swings

level of confidence in approaching task

consistence and concentration at specific task

use of leisure time

suitability of a further placement.

The feedback from the laundry was enthusiastic and positive: students, laundry and college staff agreed that it was a worthwhile experiment and one worth repeating.

Integration within the college occurs on many different levels. For example, mentally handicapped students use all college facilities generally open to other students, ie the canteen, library, football pitch, lunchtime gym activities and concerts. In addition these students are often visible throughout the college selling raffle tickets or distributing leaflets advertising bazaars and jumble sales.

Non-handicapped college members become involved in a number of ways. Community Care students often choose to use the course as their work placement; others assist the group in the task of raising funds for the Further-On course residential component. Added to this, a college committee has now been set up with a staff representative from each department to assist with fund-raising. Lastly, music students supply live entertainment at social functions, and those on the computing courses provide an introduction to video games.

There are, however, still those within the college unaware of the provision made for students with severe learning difficulties. Interested staff are constantly looking for new openings. The latest discussions have focused on the Student Union and its committee's concern that positive discrimination might be shown towards the handicapped person in order that they receive a share of leisure facilities and associated funding.

As a result of these integration initiatives students gain the chance to put into practice their newly rehearsed social skills, and some non-handicapped people are educated towards accepting the handicapped person as a contributing member of society.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

SELTEC's provision must be seen not only in terms of the handicapped student, or indeed of other members of the college; it extends also into the homes of the students, to their parents.

The course tutors and their assistants are committed to providing a support service which will assist parents to come to terms with the problems inherent in their son's or daughter's passage from adolescence to adulthood. Parent workshops are set up periodically to discuss such topics as independence, the mentally handicapped and the law, sex education and residential care.

Parents are also invited to contribute to discussions on the progress and future of the students, and to comment on any development which may be occurring in the home. On a more informal note, social functions are arranged to which parents are invited. Apart from the obvious social contact, they give parents and staff the opportunity to create bonds of trust essential to meaningful exchange.

SUMMARY

So, after five years of SELTEC provision for these young people, we look back on the past and also to the future. What has been achieved? Will the course have to change?

Although at the beginning problems were anticipated few actually arose. The students adapted well, often wanting to dress in jeans and T-shirts 'like other students'. Non-handicapped students too learned from the experience. Mental handicap became easier to accept and ceased to be something to be wary of or ostracized. Tutors also gained as they became aware of small behavioural idiosyncrasies which had been less noticeable within the handicap environment of the special school (and which now as a result could be modified).

There is no doubt that the students have become well established as members of college society. Their adjustment to the environment is speedy and natural despite its contrast with their former situation in small special schools. Few, if any, at SELTEC could now challenge their ability to cope with this transition.

The course has changed dramatically from its initial inception. There has been a conscious move away from classroom-based work to a curriculum that tries to be situation-orientated. Now there is a distinct emphasis on 'moving and doing.' Staff concerned with these students are deepening their knowledge and understanding of just how much responsibility and personal autonomy mentally handicapped students can achieve.

For the student with severe learning difficulties the future could hold many things. The fact that at the present time the majority of full-time students transfer to the Social Education Centre after the course, and not to paid employment, need not be seen as failure. Most times the students leave after two years at the college with increased confidence and maturity. Hopefully therefore they will, as a result, need less support than had been thought necessary only a short time ago.

5

Cheshire Provision for Post-16 Mentally Handicapped People

Eunice Barnett

INTRODUCTION

The Cheshire Education Authority covers an area which spreads from the industrial north to the rural south of 'old' Cheshire. The needs of the community in terms of public services are varied according to geographical accessibility, density of population and historical custom and practice (eg Runcorn and Widnes together form Halton District which is in close proximity to Merseyside and therefore shares many of its school-leaver unemployment problems: now approximately 30 per cent).

The whole 16–19 population is affected by a plethora of traditional and geographical influences. For handicapped young people these difficulties are exacerbated by individual immobility which derives either from actual physical conditions or from their intellectual inability to travel long complex journeys. In isolated rural areas these problems are much worse.

Up to the age of 19 students with disabilities are provided with travel assistance by the LEA (either financial help or actual provision). However this does not always solve the problems of complicated journeys, nor does it necessarily enable students to develop independence of movement. Nevertheless despite the inherent difficulties of living in a large complex shire county, few students in the 16–19 group are prevented from attending an appropriate educational establishment. At present for some 'appropriate' means a special residential college outside the county boundaries (eg Derwen College) but LEA policy is moving increasingly to local provision in order to promote integration with non-handicapped peers and to enable young people to live in their own home-based communities.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s staffing, buildings and resources in the school sector were improved to enable provision to be made *within* the county (except in cases of multiple handicap or severe sensory disability). This coincided with the 1970 Education Act and the resulting transfer of Junior Training Centres to the LEA. Tentative moves were also taking place in further education with the development of a special course in one college of further education and provision for post-16 patients in the large hospital for mentally handicapped patients, Cranage Hall.

By 1974 an inter-disciplinary working party had been set up to identify the further education requirements of all handicapped young people. This group reported in 1976 and after consultation with the other major services involved – Health and Social Services particularly – and college governing bodies, the report was accepted early in 1978 as the basis for LEA policy.

Even before this developments had been taking place. The original college involved in a special course was no longer in the county as a result of local government reorganisation. However similar courses had been set up in several other colleges.

It is significant that developments in schools and colleges occurred side by side with minimal overlap and no sense of competition (the machinery for achieving co-operation will be described later). It is also significant that they occurred virtually independently of the Warnock Report, which to many officers and teachers served mainly to confirm what was already being attempted. The most important result of Warnock for Cheshire was that the attention of elected members and the community at large became focused on handicapped young people and the services provided for them. What had been almost peripheral to the overall education service became a pivot for interdisciplinary discussion and implementation. The co-operation existing between further education and special schools was extended to include mainstream schools, particularly those with special units. It was advantageous to be able to demonstrate that integration was accepted and was working in colleges of further education.

The 1981 Education Act has in many ways been a disappointment to Cheshire, as to many other LEAs, in its neglect of the importance of the further and adult education sectors (with all the attendant implications for resourcing) and its rejection of the 'named person' concept (which was seen by most practitioners as the key to a continuous integrated programme for mentally handicapped people). Since its implementation in April 1983 the impetus has been in the school sector and the in-service training of teachers and managers. As yet its effects have not reached further education and the main question (Will increased integration in their school career obviate the necessity for transfer to college for most young people or will it prepare them more adequately and foster the concept of continuing education beyond 19?) will inevitably not be resolved for some time.

STUDENT POPULATION

Cheshire administrative county has a population of approximately one million of which 18 per cent are of school age. In line with the national average almost two per cent are receiving some form of special education: 2,996 (1.7 per cent) are in the county's own special schools or units: of these 2119 (70.7 per cent) are classified ESN – 1451 (68 per cent) ESN(M), 668 (32 per cent) ESN(S).

Recent statistics show that approximately 500 mentally handicapped students attend colleges of further education in a full-time or part-time capacity: 160 of these are still at school and 50 are ATC trainees attending college on link programmes. ATCs in total account for 950 trainees.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

Special schools and units

There are 16 schools for ESN pupils within the LEA. One of these provides for both the moderately and severely handicapped; two of them are hospital schools. All six administrative districts have at least one school for the severely handicapped and four at least one for the moderately handicapped. All these schools are now operating programmes of social education starting in the penultimate year of statutory school attendance but building on the programmes which have been gradually developed and monitored throughout the child's school life. Programmes derive from the basic philosophy of increasing self-confidence by placing pupils in situations which require a degree of decision-making and responsible action. They include familiarisation with transport, shopping, use of public services, contact with a wide variety of people and group problem-solving activities. Where available and appropriate residential periods are included to encourage interdependence. Link courses with colleges of further education are usually an integral part of the programme (these are described in detail in the next section). Work experience in the final year is used whenever possible but because of competing demands from YTS (B2), and from other college courses, is in practice almost non-existent. Practical situations are supported and complemented by talks from outside speakers, by contacts with the Careers Service and, if necessary, with Social Services. The results of the transition programmes are of particular value when assessments to determine the future course of action for each pupil are made.

As severely mentally handicapped young people present a particularly complex problem at the transition stage an interdisciplinary working party drew up a set of guidelines for teachers and other professional workers in the field of mental handicap. These outline procedures are intended to facilitate the transition from school to adult life and cover the curriculum in the last two years of school, with particular reference to assessment procedures, resources, communication of information and the role of the careers service. The document also sets out the essential principles of a code of practice: joint planning; interdisciplinary case conferences in the penultimate year of school; involvement of FE colleges and ATCs in school programmes; a comprehensive and readily available record system; parental involvement; relationship between the education service and the joint care planning teams.

Further and higher education

The LEA has accepted four basic aims on which college programmes are built:

1. Stimulation of personal growth and development – to allow for the maximisation of individual potential.

2. Integration into society – by minimising the effects of disability and facilitating communication, both verbal and non-verbal.

3. Enabling mentally handicapped students to make positive use of a variety of situations and processes (eg open and sheltered working environments, home, neighbourhood, residential provision, education and training.)

4. Enjoyment of leisure and recognition of particular personal interests and abilities.

The means by which these aims can be achieved vary according to individual and/or group circumstances but they must include:

1. Realistic and on-going assessment of the complete person.

2. A structured programme based on that assessment and discussed, whenever possible, with the handicapped person and/or his or her family, the school, social workers etc.

3. Assimilation into micro – and macro – 'normal' communities while recognising the importance of mutual help and support amongst mentally handicapped people and their families.

4. Close co-operation of all supportive services.

Colleges

There are four colleges of FE in Cheshire. These serve the districts of Halton, Macclesfield, Mid-Cheshire and Chester/Ellesmere Port. Crewe/Congleton is served by a tertiary college and Warrington by a combined college of further and higher education. Two colleges of higher education provide special education teacher training. Chester College has been designated by DES as one of the colleges selected nationally to run short in-service courses for mainstream teachers, who, as a result of the 1981 Act require knowledge of special education techniques.

Details of college provision are shown in Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9. In addition Macclesfield CFE has three full-time staff on permanent secondment to

Cranage Hall and Mary Dendy Hospitals where with the help of a number of part-time staff a full five-day programme is run for patients post 18. Patients are selected jointly by hospital and teaching staff. A similar programme is in operation at Newchurch Hospital run by full-time staff seconded for part of their teaching timetable from North Cheshire College, again with assistance from part-time teachers. At Daresbury Hall there is five-day cover by staff from Halton CFE with part-time staff support.

TABLE 6: Special Full-time Courses

College	*Course*	*Duration*	*Handicap*	*No. of Students*	*Objectives/Rationale*	*Curriculum Content*
North Cheshire College	Lifeliner 1	1 year	ESN(M) & S	16	1. Provide continuing basic and vocational education	1. Maths and English
					2. Develop social and life skills	2. Home management and health education
					3. Develop leisure and recreational activities	3. Drama and PE
					4. Build confidence	4. Basic craft skills
Chester CFE	Transition Course	1-2 years 21 hours per week	ESN(S)	12	A course for young people from the Work Introduction course who did not find employment or were not mature enough for FT work experience	Basic skills, metalwork PE, art and craft, music and movement, family care, hygiene, gardening
Halton CFE	Development and education through leisure	36 weeks	ESN(S) PH	13	1. Develop social independence 2. Stimulate personal growth and development 3. Make use of a variety of situations and processes 4. Develop an enjoyment of leisure	Self-help skills, communication skills, health education, numercy, literacy, craft, art, drama and music, cookery and workshop.
South Cheshire College	Extended education	36 weeks	ESN(M) & (S)		1. Develop social competence and personal adequacy	1. Personal development
					2. Provide a transitional stage between school and adult life	2. Current affairs
					3. Provide a continued basic education with emphasis on literacy/ numeracy	3. Literacy
					4. Provide effective careers guidance and counselling.	4. Numeracy
						5. Creative and leisure 6. Music 7. Domestic skills 8. Social skills 9. Health and safety 10. Vocational skills including workshop practice

TABLE 7: Link Courses with Special Schools

College	*Type of Handicap*	*Duration*	*General Objectives*	*Selection Criteria*	*Curriculum Content*
Macclesfield CFE	ESN(S)	½ day 36 weeks	Stimulate interest in a variety of media. Provide experience for FT students to work with ESN(S)	In consultation with school	Art and craft
South Cheshire College	ESN(S)	1 year 1 day a week	1. Provide a learning situation in terms of human capacities to be developed 2. Assess and develop individual potential particularly self-care and independence 3. Create and develop self confidence, particularly in relating to others 4. Introduce the student to new situations and adjust behaviour accordingly		Social and life skills, communications, cookery, and health education

TABLE 8: Link Courses with Day and Residential Centres and Hospitals

College/Centre	*Duration*	*General Objectives*	*Selection Criteria*	*Curriculum*
Chester CFE/ATC	1 day per week/year	Increase socialisation and integration	Selected by Centre staff in consultation with college	Art and craft work, metalwork, cookery and PR
Halton CFE/Hospital and ATC	36 weeks	Increase self-confidence and self-respect Develop independence and and understanding of their environment, and increase participation in group activities		Craft, PE and games
Halton CFE/Gateway Club	2 hours per week/2 terms	Develop self confidence. Introduce activities to the students to enable them to use their own resources		Craft, art and design
South Cheshire College/ATC	6 hours per week/1 year	Increase socialisation and integration. Increase awareness, confidence, dexterity, imagination and self-sufficiency	By discussion with Officer in charge	Life and social skills, art and craft, health education, environmental studies
Mid-Cheshire CFE/ATC	1 day per wk/ 1 year	Develop creative ability	Selected by ATC	Art – variety of forms
Day Hostel	1 evening per week/1 year	Develop creative ability and leisure interest	Selected by hostel staff	Art – variety of forms
ATC	1 year (PTD)	Develop creative and manipulative skills	Selected by ATC	Pottery

TABLE 9: Outreach

College/Site	*Duration*	*No. of Students*	*General Objectives*	*Selection Criteria*	*Curriculum*
North Cheshire College/ Newchurch Hospital	Full-time all year	105	Provide further education	Referred by hospital staff in consultation with course tutor	Art, poetry, drama, music, dancing, basic literacy and numeracy, communication
Macclesfield CFE/Parkside Hospital	Part-time 36 weeks				
Cranage and Mary Dendy	Part-time 36 weeks	257			Music, PE, swimming, literacy, numeracy, art, life and social skills, environmental studies
Halton CFE/ Daresbury Hall	Full-time 48 weeks	52	1. Improve communication skills 2. Develop an interest in and an awareness of the world outside Daresbury Hall 3. Introduce students to basic educational and social experiences 4. Encourage students to maximise their physical and intellectual potential		Environmental studies, PE basic science, cookery human biology, soft crafts, art, music, current affairs

Staffing

From experience of running a comprehensive programme for handicapped students (suffering from a range of disabilities, not only mental handicap) certain factors have been considered to be of prime importance:

careful curriculum planning which takes account of continuous evaluation and diagnostic feedback;

a structure for co-operation and co-ordination between services which is not dependent on informal contact and personal whim;

staff development both for teaching staff at all grades and, where possible, for non-teaching staff;

attention to organisational factors which will facilitate the problem-free absorption of mentally handicapped students into a college (eg realistic assessment of resources; formulation of health and safety guidelines).

The choice of staff to work with mentally handicapped students is critical to the success of any programme. In the early stages of the Cheshire scheme staff were largely self-selecting. Use was made of existing members of staff who because of personal interest, expertise and experience were prepared to give a significant proportion of their timetables to this new and specialised work. Usually they had been employed to teach on the 'caring' courses and had backgrounds in social work, nursing and, very occasionally, special education. Only as the programme has gathered impetus has it been possible to appoint staff to teach specifically in this area of work, although it is accepted policy that no teacher should work exclusively with handicapped students. Teachers from a wide variety of disciplines are encouraged to contribute to courses. In this way students benefit not only from the number of subject options made available to them but also from contact with people who have worked in many different types of employment situations and who bring with them an expanded life experience. Engineering, building and catering staff have been particularly helpful.

College staff can be divided into three categories: those who have experience of and commitment to the handicapped; those, the largest group, who have goodwill towards the handicapped and are interested in helping but who are beset by doubts as to their own ability and emotional response; and those who for some deep-seated, possibly sub-conscious, reason cannot work with handicapped people, particularly those who are mentally handicapped. The latter are never put under any compulsion to work in a situation which could only be detrimental to teacher and students.

Staff working in this new and rapidly developing area of further education require in-service training. Cheshire LEA places a high priority on staff development and accepts that it is an integral part of the service to mentally handicapped students. Core staff attend DES courses, special national conferences and events sponsored by the National Bureau for Handicapped Students. Cheshire is also represented on the FEU Working Party on Students with Special Needs which enables information and ideas to be disseminated throughout the county. On a county basis day and residential courses have been mounted on specific types of handicap and their implications (eg epilepsy). Many of these have been interdisciplinary so that benefit has accrued not only from the formal programme but also from the informal interaction of professional individuals and groups. There is an annual interdisciplinary day conference on mental handicap which is sponsored in alternate years by Education and Social Services. Teachers from schools as well as further education participate and emphasis is laid on *life-time* provision for mentally handicapped people. Courses are also planned for specific discipline areas (eg Engineering and Building) so that particular problems of curriculum, workshop organisation and safety can be examined in detail.

The City and Guilds 731 Course was run for one year in Cheshire but was not found to be appropriate to staff needs. The emphasis is now being placed

on in-house programmes. A pilot scheme based on a checklist of key questions for teachers of students with moderate learning difficulties (drawn up under the auspices of the FEU) is under development at North Cheshire College. It is hoped that the in-house approach will allow for flexible timing and therefore enable a wider range of staff to participate.

Adult Education

Adult Education in Cheshire is not sharply differentiated from further education. A considerable amount of provision is still made within the colleges and in certain districts adult institutes are administered by college staff. Currently the LEA is in the process of fusing together adult and youth work to provide a community education structure, and colleges are seen to have a role as establishments serving the local community irrespective of age groupings.

The specific interest of adult/community education is represented on a central committee which co-ordinates continuing education for handicapped students. While there is not a totally separate service then, certain functions may be highlighted as having a non-college basis. Many of these derive from the original adult literacy scheme now expanded under the aegis of the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) to include other forms of compensatory education. In some instances individual mentally handicapped people have been included in a scheme where they have been placed in a one-to-one teaching situation with specially chosen volunteer tutors. In other instances special groups have been formed in Social Services hostels.

Part-time teachers in the adult education service have been employed to work with voluntary bodies and foundations to provide special craft classes in the evening and to give tuition in homecraft and basic cookery to mentally handicapped people living on their own or in small groups.

Adult Training Centres

There are nine ATCs in Cheshire. Six of the centres have 12 places for special care trainees and a new centre, which will open in January 1984 in Chester and replace the existing one, will also have 12 special care places. It is possible that a further centre will be opened in the financial year 1984/85. One district, Congleton, has no centre and does not propose to open one. Instead they have proposed a 'Lifetime' scheme. This scheme, which is under development by Congleton District Social Services, is 'an integrated system of residential, day care and training services for mentally handicapped adults and their families'. Its underlying principles are:

1. A commitment to partnership with Health Authorities, LEA, and voluntary groups, to ensure mutually discussed and agreed development of services.

2. An emphasis on the development of varied and innovative services, rather than upon the re-duplication of existing models without good cause.

3. The organisation of services and management structures around the needs of the consumer, and the primacy of the individual care plan as the basis for action.

4. A commitment to ongoing research and evaluation of all services.

A steering committee representing all the interested parties is already working towards implementation and the signs are that the rest of the county is likely to be developing similar schemes rather than opening more and larger ATCs to cope with the growing problem.

All the Cheshire ATCs have developed their own particular ethos and have not been constrained by any rigid central policy. Like many centres throughout the country they have moved away from the old dedication to contract work, which was so much a product of the late 1950s/early 60s philosophy, and have embraced the concept of Social Education Centres. The extent of the movement has varied but each one is committed to the development of the whole person and provides experiences, both inside and outside the centre, that will enable trainees to achieve greater social competence and a degree of personal fulfilment.

Certain ATCs prefer to provide a complete programme, while others have been eager to work with colleges of further education on a link basis. This interaction has benefitted all concerned. College staff have gained from the practical expertise of instructors; full-time students who are destined for ATCs have met trainees and as a result felt less threatened by the new experience to come; trainees attending college have enjoyed the larger environment and the opportunity to practise and crystallise social skills.

Cheshire centres have not escaped the difficulties that have beset so many ATCs in the last five years. Youth unemployment has led to the admission of mildly handicapped young people who previously worked successfully in open employment.

The accepted policy not to admit children and young people to long-stay hospitals has increased the demand for special care places and has led to a demand for increased staffing ratios, accommodation and equipment at a time of dwindling resources. These pressures have occurred against the background of staff professional insecurity occasioned by the cessation of the Diploma in the training and further education of mentally handicapped adults (DTMHA) and its replacement by the Certificate in Social Service (CSS).

USE OF SPECIALIST EXPERTISE

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of Cheshire's provision for mentally handicapped people is the attempt to maximise the use of specialist expertise by promoting an interdisciplinary approach at the planning and policy-making stage. Reference has already been made to case conference procedures at schools but in fact this is only the summation of on-going interaction between concerned professional groups. The school psychological service ensures that each educational psychologist has responsibility for a group of special schools and maintains regular structured contact. This service is child centred while the three special education advisers have a more establishment-centred responsibility for their groups of schools. The third regular link is with the appropriate district medical officer.

In parallel, but linking through case conferences etc, is the district mental handicap team with its specialist services of a psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, social worker and community nurse. However, only the more severely handicapped or those presenting incapacitating clinical/emotional/-social problems will have the services of this team.

Integrated services for the school child are a feature of most local authority provision but less usual is the continuation of this into the post-school period, when it is no longer part of statutory requirement. The main vehicle for ensuring co-operation is the County Steering Committee for Handicapped Students in Continuing Education. The Steering Committee was originally conceived as a standing committee of the County Academic Board. It is chaired by the Senior Adviser for Further Education who has special responsibility for handicapped students and its membership comprises: a representative from each of the colleges of further education (including the tertiary and the combined FE/HE colleges), the agriculture college and the two colleges of higher education (including the independent establishment); the Assistant Director for Special Education; the Senior Adviser for Special Education; the Assistant County Careers Officer for Special Services; one Community Education Organiser; a principal officer from Social Services; a representative from MSC and, occasionally, a representative from the health service.

The committee formulates policy on curriculum and staff development (for which it has a small sub-group to work on actual implementation). It monitors progress in each sector, disseminates information both local and national, and examines specific problems (eg health and safety). In addition it has served to encourage informal contact between members and has kept senior management continuously aware of the needs and the achievements of this part of the service. Each of the six colleges referred to above has a support/-design group which mirrors the County Steering Committee at local level. These comprise representatives from schools, local careers, Social Services and the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). It is chaired by a member of the college 'core' team and concerns itself with details of selection, admission,

curriculum design, assessment and evaluation. These groups have built up an atmosphere of trust which allows for the exchange of the most confidential information if this is seen to be in the interests of the young person, and have largely obviated any feeling of competition or resentment between sectors – both crucial factors in the maximisation of expertise.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cheshire LEA has moved a long way to meeting the aims that were agreed at the early planning stages nine years ago. The true value of that achievement can only be appreciated if it is viewed against a background of diminishing resources and the constantly changing pattern of further education brought about by youth unemployment. It has only been possible because of the commitment of staff, the readiness of senior management to accept the pressures on the system and the degree of interdisciplinary co-operation.

The most significant problem still unsolved is that of being able to provide education for mentally handicapped people for as long as they require it, either continuously or through a variety of educational opportunities at different points in their lives. Obviously increased resources would help considerably in the development of a flexible programme. It has been claimed that the 'named person' concept would be the most significant single factor in ensuring a properly structured lifelong programme for each individual and that this would require the backup support of a central records system to enable information to be collected and disseminated as efficiently as possible. Paradoxically the less severely handicapped are most likely to be lost to all services once they have reached adulthood and yet these people can probably benefit most from an integrated oprogramme with continuing educational input.

All the colleges involve parents of mentally handicapped students in consultation and counselling but there is a need to include them in actual activities (as envisaged by the Lifetime plan) so that the family unit can be strengthened and some of the stress alleviated. This again requires resources and flexibility of delivery if it is to be realistic. (Perhaps the Congleton project will demonstrate how particular problems in this area can be overcome.) Overall within colleges there is a need for constant curriculum reappraisal and for increased in-service training. One college dealing with a high proportion of severely handicapped students employs care assistants. An extension of this provision to all colleges would enable more severely handicapped students to be accepted and would allow teaching staff greater opportunity to develop individual learning programmes. Again the only barrier is one of resourcing.

Residential experience gained during courses has proved invaluable in developing the confidence and social competence of students. In spite of financial difficulties for students, their families and the institution, it is intended to maintain residential periods as part of the programme. If they

could be organised by interdisciplinary teams their value could be increased. This has not yet been attempted but is considered a possibility.

From the beginning it has been agreed that Cheshire would not attempt to develop one college as a centre of excellence in providing for mentally handicapped students; the philosophy of the 1981 Act vindicates that decision. The points made above demonstrate that although there are still many improvements to be made, mentally handicapped young people and adults have undoubtedly benefitted from being accepted into colleges throughout the county.

6

Provision in Special Schools

Seamus Hegarty

The primary concern of this report is with developments in provision for young people with severe learning difficulties in the further education and adult education sectors. Significant advances in provision have taken place in these sectors and it is important that they be documented. The central – and growing – importance of special schools must however not be overlooked. The special school sector is a major provider for this group and the extent to which it is utilised is increasing rapidly.

The figures presented in Table 10 show a considerable increase in the number of pupils staying on beyond age 16 in ESN(S) special schools between 1981 and 1983. At each age level there has been a steady increase. If the number at age 15 is taken as an estimate of the size of subsequent age cohorts, an overall comparison in percentage terms is possible. This reveals that in 1983 half of the 16-19 year olds in the group were in special schools, as compared with approximately one-third in 1981.

TABLE 10: Number of pupils in ESN(S) Schools staying on beyond 16, 1981-83

	1981	*1982*	*1983*
15	2099	2161	2195
16	1129	1376	1634
17	656	813	1129
18	285	374	528
19	38	39	57

This trend is more pronounced for younger students. The proportion in special schools at age 16 (using the same baseline estimate) grew from 54 per cent in 1981 to 74 per cent in 1983. For older pupils the absolute numbers are smaller but the percentage increases are in fact greater. It may be noted also that the number of young people aged 19 and over in special schools, while small, is also on the increase.

The growth is not spread evenly on a national basis. It is ad hoc and heavily dependent on particular local developments. In a few cases these arise out of LEA policy but more usually they reflect individual initiatives.

This growth in the utilisation of special schools by 16–19 year olds with severe learning difficulties is a relatively recent phenomenon, and it looks set to continue for some time to come. There are numerous reasons for this. Without a detailed empirical study it is difficult to be specific, but any explanation of this development would have to take account of the following factors.

1. Legislative pressure

There has been recurrent controversy over the precise legal duty of local education authorities with regard to post-16 education. Despite this and the publication of an official report *The Legal Basis of Further Education* (DES, 1981), the law remains ambiguous. Section 8 of the 1944 Education Act requires local authorities to make suitable provision for senior pupils while Section 41 requires them to provide 'adequate facilities' for further education. In practice, two interpretations of the legislation are maintained: (a) LEAs are required to secure provision either in school or FE for all 16–19 year olds who want it; or (b) LEAs are required to secure provision in schools for all those 16–19 year olds who wish to continue in full-time education.

If a local education authority is persuaded of the second interpretation, there is evident pressure toward increasing school provision for those who traditionally have not availed themselves of it. This includes in particular 16–19 year olds with severe learning difficulties. Because of the severity of their handicaps and the slow progress of integration in their regard, the increased provision will almost invariably be in the special school sector.

2. LEA policy

A few LEAs (eg Wirral) have decided as a matter of policy to provide for this group in special schools. This has necessitated building up provision. In some cases this increase has gone along with rationalisation of school provision. A growing number of authorities are moving away from all-age special schools and making the primary/secondary split that is customary in mainstream education. In some instances (Tameside) the secondary provision runs from 14–19 years. Elsewhere (Ipswich) 16–19 units attached to schools are being developed.

3. Response to falling rolls

Special schools have suffered from the consequences of falling rolls just as other schools have. In addition to the general drop in the school-age population they have also had to contend with the integration movement. One way of utilising the space made available in this way – and helping to ensure survival – has been to build up post-16 provision.

4. Parental choice

Many parents have been exercising a preference for school rather than placement in an adult training centre. This seems to be for a variety of reasons: the school sector is familiar to them and offers better hope of an educational programme; adult training centres are often perceived in a negative way; and their children would continue to be with age peers if they stayed in school.

5. Lack of alternative provision
Despite the very recent development of provision for this group in a number of colleges, the amount of provision available nationally in this way is still very small. Likewise there is a serious shortage of places in adult training centres and sheltered employment workshops.

6. Financial pressures on LEAs
Schools tend to cope with this group without the normal enhancement of resources given to other post-16 provision. Hence it is cheaper for local education authorities to cater for them in this way than to make new/-additional provision in the further education sector.

7. Link arrangements
A number of co-operative arrangements have been made between schools, adult training centres and further education colleges. These involve link programmes whereby young people split their time between different institutions. A net effect of this is that more young people are staying on in schools.

Looking to the future, one can already discern a trend that is likely to assume increasing importance. This relates to the balance in the severely handicapped population between those who have additional handicaps and those who do not. The former are profoundly handicapped as regards both learning and the activities of daily living and have extensive need of special care resources.

The continuation of this trend will pose significant problems for providers, be they local education authorities or Social Services departments. It is known that current provision by Social Services departments for this population nationally is inadequate. For both schools and colleges this population is already raising fundamental questions about the nature of the curriculum and its delivery. Any substantial increase in the number of profoundly handicapped children and young people will exacerbate these issues.

7

Adult Education Provision for Mentally Handicapped Students – Analysis of Survey Findings

Alan Dean

INTRODUCTION

Identification of adult education institutes providing for mentally handicapped students took place via the same procedures adopted for the further education survey: ie through local education authorities (LEAs), the Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults (MENCAP), NFER and nominations from informed individuals. Of 72 institutes contacted 27 were found to have relevant provision. * Table 11 gives a breakdown of institutes' responses.

TABLE 11: Institute Responses

Completed returns from colleges making provision	27
Confirmation of nil provision	6
No information provided	39
TOTAL	**72**

The survey findings will be discussed in terms of

1. contextual information (eg student numbers, accommodation arrangements)

2. course organisation and curriculum content

Details of course organisation and curriculum content will be presented in terms of three categories: basic education courses (ie basic numeracy, basic literacy, and living skills); creative courses (ie dance, drama, music and art and craft); mainstream courses. The first two are *special* courses (ie provided specifically for mentally handicapped students), whilst the third type are also attended by non-handicapped students.

* It should be noted that many were incomplete returns (ie not all questions were answered by all institutes).

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

This section will cover:
student numbers
accommodation
travel arrangements
enrolment procedures
AEI classification of mental handicap
use of external specialist expertise
staff development

Student numbers

Twenty-one of the 27 responding institutes provided data on the numbers of students attending special classes (ie those held specifically for mentally handicapped students). The numbers of students attending these classes varies between four and 300: in 10 cases attendances are lower than 50, whilst in five they are higher than 150. Mainstream class attendance was reported by 12 institutes. Numbers of students involved varies between three and 33: in five cases attendance is higher than 10 students.

Accommodation

Institutes were asked to state whether special classes were held in the same location as mainstream classes, or elsewhere.

In 20 institutes these classes are held on the same premises as other adult education classes. In 10 institutes additional classes are held in a variety of settings: these are most commonly day centres, residential hostels, adult training centres (ATCs) and hospitals; however a Gateway club, the premises of a local mental handicap society and a separate institute annexe were also mentioned.

Travel arrangements

Students travel to adult education classes in a wide variety of ways, the most common being public transport (usually alone or with other students, less often with parents or guardians). Local authority minibuses are used by less than half of the institutes (and in only two cases are these the sole means of transport). Where students are thought unable to travel by public means private cars or taxis are just as likely to be used. In a few cases students walk to classes.

Enrolment procedures

At 11 institutes enrolment takes place either within a feeder centre (eg ATC, residential hostel) or via liaison between institute and centre staff. In a further 13 institutes no special procedures are adopted, although staff do complete all necessary paperwork on behalf of the student in the majority of cases. In seven

institutes fees are either greatly reduced or waived completely. Interviews are used during enrolment in only two institutes.

Three institutes made a distinction between enrolment for special classes and mainstream classes. In one, enrolment for special classes takes place in an ATC, whilst mainstream enrolment is carried out with the assistance of a non-handicapped student (this initiative is discussed in detail in Penny Willis's paper, below). In the other two institutes enrolment for special classes, but not for mainstream classes, takes place in a feeder institute.

AEI Classification of mental handicap

In the school sector, and to a large extent within further education, there is a broad consensus regarding the classification of levels of mental handicap. These may not always be used or valued but terms such as ESN(S) or 'severe learning difficulties' do have common currency. Further education staff have to some extent inherited these from special school staff, with whom close contact is usually maintained. Such links, however, are less common in adult education. Preliminary discussions with AEI staff prior to the survey revealed that they are more concerned with students' levels of dependency than their prior levels of intellectual development (although this obviously was considered to be important). Hence it was thought to be important to identify the *common* classification terms used by AEI staff.

Ten institutes reported that a classification system for mentally handicapped people was not used. The remaining institutes, excluding four that failed to respond, used various combinations of systems used in other institutions; particularly terms formerly used in the education system (ie ESN(S)/(M)) and those reported as being used in sub-normality hospitals (ie high/low dependency and high/low ability). For example, one institute uses four categories of mental handicap: slow learner, ESN(M), ESN(S), and high dependency. In another, students are referred to as being mentally handicapped, of high dependency, or in need of special care. In a third institute the terms high grade ESN, low grade ESN, and very low grade ESN are used.

There is no generally accepted classification system within adult education. What is apparent is a tendency to favour a scale which has more than two points (eg ESN(S), ESN(M)) and incorporates a 'dependency' dimension.

Use of external specialist expertise

As with the further education survey professions or occupations thought by the project team to have expertise which could be used in support of AEI staff were identified: educational psychologists, careers officers, social workers, general practitioners, 'creative' professionals, psychiatric workers, staff of voluntary organisations, staff of ATCs or social education centres (SECs) and LEA advisers. Institute staff were asked to indicate if such specialists were made use of and, if so, to provide a brief description of their role.

Educational psychologists
Educational psychologists are consulted by staff from five institutes. In two cases their role was described in terms of individual problem oriented consultation, and in one they attended case conferences.

Careers officers
Liaison between AEI staff and careers officers was reported in six cases. Their role was described exclusively in terms of student referral to institute classes.

Social workers
AEI staff/social worker liaison occurs in 16 institutes. Five reported using social workers as an additional source of student referral (although not necessarily to the exclusion of other forms of participation). Social workers may also be consulted regarding students' emotional or behavioural problems, particularly those which arise as a result of factors external to the institute (trouble with local skinheads reported in one case, family problems in another). They can also be involved in matters concerning students' general personal development, where their detailed knowledge of individual students can often be of help to AEI staff.

General practitioners
Contact with general practitioners was reported in six cases, though in only two of these was their role described. In one institute contact related to the epileptic fits of a single student, whilst in the other contact took place regarding medical disorders which could affect a student's performance at the institute.

Creative professionals
Eleven institutes reported using creative professionals. Overall there are two main forms of use: regular employment as a tutor, and involvement on a visiting basis (eg visiting theatre groups or workshop organisers). Tutors of creative classes at AEIs are usually professional, or former professional, dancers, artists or writers etc. (Further details of the experience and qualifications of staff teaching creative classes are given below).

Psychiatric workers
Staff from eight institutes have contact with psychiatric workers. In two cases clinical psychologists refer students to classes; in another they participate in student case conferences, whilst in a third they act as specialist teaching advisers. Details of the form contact take in the other five institutes were not available.

Voluntary organisation staff
Contact with voluntary organisation staff takes place in 16 institutes. These organisations (eg MENCAP) are used as sources of information or advice and,

occasionally, funding. In two cases MENCAP was reported as being a sponsor of special classes.

ATC or SEC Staff
Liaison with ATC or SEC staff takes place in 17 cases. Often students who attend AEI classes are ATC/SEC trainees and some classes are held within these two institutions. Hence contact is often more than being merely problem oriented or referral based (as is the case with links with most other external experts). In a number of cases close involvement with course development was reported.

Staff development

In common with the further education survey analysis, staff development will be considered in terms of both internal and external programmes.

Internal staff development
Internal staff development programmes are organised in 16 institutes. Most commonly these consist of informal staff meetings held on a termly or, in a few cases, yearly basis. These meetings are the sole form of internal staff development in seven institutes. More formal workshops or conferences, to which outside experts may be invited, take place in five institutes. In two cases these may also involve *regular* attendance by social services staff (ie a specific invitation is not thought to be necessary due to the close links which exist between the AEI and social services). Staff development via feedback from external conferences also takes place to a limited extent in a few institutes.

External staff development
External staff development programmes are operated by 13 institutes. These involve attendance at conferences, courses and workshops run by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU), the City Literary Institute in London, MENCAP, LEAs, other AEIs and further education colleges. Specific details of these courses were not provided.

BASIC EDUCATION COURSES

Basic education courses were sub-divided in the questionnaire into six subject areas, namely: basic numeracy, basic literacy, social interaction skills, transport training, basic homecraft and community use. Although these areas in practice often form distinct parts of special courses, occasionally they are merged in various combinations. For example, basic numeracy may be covered in a functional way during homecraft or community use classes. However a clearer understanding of the contribution of each of these topic areas to the education of mentally handicapped people will be gained if they are treated to some extent as being largely distinct from each other. However it

. should be borne in mind that development of skills in one area both depends upon and determines development in others.

Basic numeracy

Basic numeracy classes are held in 18 of the 27 institutes sampled. Some institutes have quite small numbers of students whilst others have as many as, in one case, 120. However for teaching purposes much smaller groups are formed: staff/student ratios fall mostly in the range 1:4 to 1:6. Courses last for two hours per week in the majority of cases, and from 30 to 45 weeks per year. Attendance is usually restricted to either day or evening within a given institute; in only two institutes are they held during both periods.

Numeracy teaching is normally based on the functional, or practical, use of numbers. Addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are covered in most classes in the majority of institutes. The areas covered by each individual, however, will depend on his or her ability. Whenever possible arithmetic procedures will be taught in terms of everyday problems using familiar concepts. Addition and subtraction can be taught during a shopping trip to a local supermarket. Multiplication and division may be covered in a lesson on household budgetting, and board games are sometimes used to teach students to count. The concept of time can be introduced through the use of bus or rail timetables. These are just a few examples of the wide range of approaches used by AEI staff. This variety is also illustrated by the diversity of teaching materials used: clocks, weighing machines, video recordings, money and maps.

Numeracy teaching provides a good example of the way various topics are combined into one class. By using, say, local shops or bus timetables, students learn not only the basic principles of arithmetic but also gain familiarity with different aspects of the community.

Staff teaching on these courses range in age from 20 to 70 years (a large proportion being over 45). Most are graduates, qualified teachers or have other higher qualifications (eg nursing or social work diplomas) and have many years experience in mainstream or special education. Many members of staff are employed on a part-time basis.

Basic literacy

Basic literacy classes are held in 17 institutes. Student numbers vary between six and 120; most are in the region of 6–10, and only three institutes have 100 or more students. The staff/student ratio in most institutes lies in the range 1:6 to 1:8, With few exceptions classes last for two hours per week and usually for 35 weeks (with a total range of 30–46 weeks). Classes can be held either in the day or the evening but not usually both in a given institute.

As with numeracy classes literacy is taught in terms of everyday objects and events. It is related to things-in-the-world and not carried out in an abstract or academic way. Students are taught to write by being asked, say, to complete forms which they, or their parents, may occasionally encounter. The use of signs, timetables or instructions often encountered in the community can lead to improvement in students' reading skills. In addition books, games, social sight cards etc. are used.

Staff who teach in this area are the same in terms of age range, qualifications and experience as those who teach numeracy classes.

Living skills

The remaining curriculum components of courses for mentally handicapped students (namely, social interaction skills, transport training and community use) are seldom given separate treatment within AEIs; mostly they are aspects of courses focused on the development of 'living skills'. For this reason the discussion of these three curriculum areas will diverge from the questionnaire structure and an 'integrated' approach will be adopted.

Classes in these subject areas attract up to 50 students, although the usual figure is below 15. Staff/student ratios lie between 1:4 and 1:6 in the majority of cases. In common with other types of special classes the living skills classes can be held either during the day or in the evening, and usually last for two hours per day, 36 weeks per year.

Staff vary in age from early 20s to late 50s, although most fall in the range 30–40. Most are graduates, qualified teachers or hold other higher qualifications in subjects related to their work.

With respect to these structural and staffing details living skills courses are little different from other special courses.

Skills for living are multifarious. Hence courses designed to provide these vary from institute to institute. In some cases courses concentrate on, say, homecraft or cookery and, in order for purchases to be made, involve trips to local shops. To be able to buy goods students need to develop basic arithmetic skills and, in addition, may have to use public transport. Therefore, they learn more than just how to cook a meal. Courses primarily directed towards the development of communication skills may also use shops and supermarkets as a teaching resource (thereby incorporating aspects of 'homecraft') as well as libraries and post offices (where literacy and numeracy skills may be required).

Clearly any course designed to develop a student's overall 'living skills' (or independence) will of necessity involve attention to basic reading, writing, arithmetic and interpersonal communication skills. It is possible to teach these areas separately from each other but mentally handicapped people often learn best when teaching is practically oriented: hence AEI staff overall appear to favour multi-topic rather than single topic living skills courses (as the examples above demonstrate).

There are however examples which do not follow this pattern. Courses provided by a large institute in London are a good illustration. At this institute close attention is paid to students' 'social' rather than solely 'functional' needs – functional needs are met through the development of practical skills in the areas of shopping, cooking, etc. Social needs relate to the desire for interactive involvement in social settings (partly satisfied, for example, through self-expression in group discussions). * This approach has led to the evolution of courses entitled, for example, 'The Politics of Living' (which examines via discussion and day trips, decision-making processes on a personal, local and national level) or 'Let's Talk About It' (which aims to improve language skills, and to encourage students to experiment with ideas and learn to discuss their personal beliefs and experiences). A further course 'What Clothes Say' aims to provide creative opportunities through the medium of clothes design and manufacture; here, too, group discussions of ideas and possible approaches and visits outside the institute are used extensively.

Greater student involvement in the day-to-day affairs of their ATCs arises, it was reported, as a result of this form of provision. It seems that staff at the institute believe that improved personal confidence, resulting from increased powers of self-expression, leads to a greater propensity to become involved in the local community.

CREATIVE COURSES

For the purposes of this survey creative courses have been sub-divided into five categories; dance, drama, music, art and craft, and 'other creative/-recreational' classes. Sixteen institutes offer courses covered by one or more of these categories.

Dance

Dance classes are held by nine institutes (in one case it is a joint dance/drama class). These classes are attended by from six to 20 students. Staff/student ratios vary between 1:6 and 1:20 and classes last for 1½, two, or, in one case, three hours per week for 30–45 weeks per year.

The types of dance on offer vary. One institute runs square dance lessons, whilst another holds popmobility or 'disco keep fit' sessions. These classes are not attended solely by young people; students over 60 also take part.

Although physical fitness is an obvious outcome for students attending these classes, there were many other benefits put forward by institute staff. The most comprehensive list of outcomes was provided by an ILEA institute and comprised: improved body awareness; kinesthetic appreciation; enjoyment from developing relationships with others; improved attention to directional

*These two areas of needs will of course overlap on the level of language (which is necessary for both functional and social interaction).

instructions; improved behaviour and improved fitness. Increased self-confidence and personal enjoyment were mentioned by several other institutes.

Staff teaching on these courses are aged from 25-45 and are either qualified teachers (two in dance and movement) or hold appropriate specialised qualifications (eg London School of Contemporary Dance Diploma). As with other adult education classes extensive use is made of part-time staff.

Drama

Drama classes are held in seven institutes. The number of places available varies between eight and 50, with staff/student ratios between 1:8 and 1:20 per class. Classes are held either during the day or in the evening and last for one or two hours per week for 35-48 weeks per year.

Courses are overall focused on the improvement of students' powers of self-expression. In addition, staff reported gains in students self-confidence, verbal skills, social awareness and self image.

Staff who take these courses vary in age from 25-54, although the majority are under 35. They either have degrees, teaching qualifications or other relevant qualifications. With the exception of two members of staff, who had teaching experience only , all had both taught and acted professionally.

Music

Music classes are held in six institutes. These classes are attended by from 10-80 students. Staff/student ratios fall between 1:1 and 1:20 but most are near to 1:10. Classes are held either during the day or in the evening and last between 1½ hours and two hours per week for 35-38 weeks per year.

Both singing and playing musical instruments are involved in the majority of classes. Students are taught aspects of musical technique and are encouraged to develop personal creative skills. For example, in one institute students are encouraged to write songs, whilst in another a musical group which often appears at public events has been formed. The organiser of this group believes that they perform at a standard equal to that of a good non-handicapped group. This belief supports the view that mentally handicapped people are often as competent in creative pursuits as non-handicapped people.

Staff stated that students gain, in addition to musical skills, improved manual dexterity and hand/eye co-ordination, enhanced self-image (through achievement), improved speech, increased ability to attend to directional advice (ie better self-discipline) and, most of all, a sense of enjoyment.

Staff teaching these courses hold teaching qualifications, music degrees or other qualifications relevant to this area (eg qualified music therapists). Their age range is 21-53, although the majority are under 35. Most have several years

teaching experience, some with mentally handicapped people, and many had performed as professional musicians.

Art and craft

A variety of arts and crafts classes are held by 11 institutes. These include pottery, woodwork, painting, flower arranging, weaving and sculpture. The most common is pottery which is offered by five institutions.

Numbers of students enrolling for these classes vary between six and 120; however the majority have less than 20 students. Staff/student ratios vary between 1:3 and 1:10. Students are aged between 16 and 75 and attend either in the daytime or in the evening (although as in other cases this choice is not always available within a given institute). Classes last between 1½ and 2½ hours per week (two hours in the majority of cases) and from 30–40 weeks per year.

Expected outcomes for students are less clearly expressed than for other courses. The development of creativity, improved motor co-ordination, and personal enjoyment was mentioned in several cases. Many institutes however were unable to provide a clear statement of their expected outcomes for students. It would appear that the provision of an enjoyable experience is the predominant intention of staff.

Staff teaching on these courses are aged between 25 and 70 and, in the majority of cases, have teaching qualifications or arts and craft diplomas. Less than half gave details of previous experience but those who did had previous teaching experience with mentally handicapped people.

Other creative/recreational activities

Courses in this category are offered by five institutes. The subject areas covered are horticulture, swimming, beauty-care, yoga and a composite course entitled 'Art, Music and Other Things' which is held at a large institute in London. This latter course involves music, painting, drawing, modelling, sculpture, drama, poetry and dance; it is a direct response to a student request for a course that 'involves everything'. Classes are usually organised around a single theme (eg the River Thames).

Classes are attended by four to 54 students, have staff/student ratios which vary between 1:4 and 1:10 and last between 1½ and four hours per week for 35–40 weeks per year. In common with other courses day or evening attendance takes place depending on the institute concerned.

Staff are either qualified teachers or have appropriate qualifications in their subject area (eg a certificate in beauty therapy). All have previous related experience in schools, colleges or AEIs.

MAINSTREAM COURSES

Mainstream course attendance by mentally handicapped students was reported by 11 institutes. The types of courses offered vary considerably. They include physical education, home economics, pottery, swimming, dressmaking, dance, basic literacy and numeracy, and music appreciation. Pottery and literacy are the most frequently occurring.

The ratio of handicapped to non-handicapped students varies from class to class. A cookery class in a London AEI has six mentally handicapped students out of a total of 21. In other classes of this type there can be as few as one handicapped to 25 non-handicapped students. Most mainstream classes mentioned are attended by one or two handicapped students and between 10 and 35 non-handicapped students.

Integration strategies

Two institutes have developed initiatives designed to help the integration of mentally handicapped students into mainstream classes. One uses student 'befrienders'or helpers whilst the other operates 'transition classes' (during which students become familiar with the institute) two afternoons per week, and provides in-service training for both full-time and part-time staff.

Staff/student problems

Staff were asked to report on problems which have arisen through the integration of mentally handicapped students into mainstream classes. Overall few problems were described: only five institutes recorded problems for mentally handicapped students, five for non-handicapped students, four for members of staff. Specific details are given below.

Mentally handicapped students

Staff from two institutes stated that travel arrangements were often problematic for handicapped students. Frequently students have to undertake complex journeys and, if unaided, difficulties can be encountered. Two lecturers mentioned that students may face problems in class if they do not receive close and frequent attention from the lecturer. One institute noted that some mentally handicapped people have left classes due to a 'feeling of isolation'.

Other students

Four institutes noted initial reluctance or embarrassment on the part of non-handicapped students. One lecturer stated that, 'they are embarrassed and don't know how to cope. As a result they treat them like children and want to do too much for them.' Some students, it was reported, are critical of the idea of integration. They do not wish to share a class with a mentally handicapped person. Another lecturer believes that handicapped students are a source of

irritation to the whole of the class. However he or she felt that a 'sensitive' tutor could overcome these problems.

Teaching staff

Two main views were aired regarding problems for teaching staff. The first relates to a lack of confidence, or general apprehension, due to lack of experience, and the second concerns the extra work it was thought necessary to undertake to ensure that mentally handicapped students make progress in their chosen subject.

Staff experience and qualifications

Staff in general have art or craft qualifications in the area they teach. Only three lecturers were reported as having teaching qualifications. No members of staff appeared to have previous experience with mentally handicapped students. Mainstream teaching staff who require specialist assistance will often find this unavailable. In most cases staff will have to refer to special course lecturers if they encounter problems.

8

Southwark Adult Education Institute Provision for Mentally Handicapped Students

Chris Lloyd

Historically Southwark AEI has been involved in the education of mentally handicapped people within this South East London Borough for over five years. During that time the philosophy concerning work within the Institute has changed considerably, and the present orientation is towards much greater involvement of as many of the students as possible in the mainstream life of the Institute.

Much of this orientation is due to our successful experience in 'colonising' a small mainstream Adult Education branch close to the Day Centre which many of our mentally handicapped students attend in order to establish a Mental Handicap Project. The need for many mentally handicapped people to have specific training in social interaction skills has been called into question by the success which students have experienced in integrating into the Grange Arts Centre Branch as a matter of course.

There seems to be evidence that a 'normal' environment is the best single motivating factor and learning tack for mentally handicapped people to acquire better social skills. The orientation of the Grange is that the students' handicap should be regarded only insofar as it affects their ability to learn and relate to others, and by virtually ignoring the fact that 50 per cent of the students who attend the Grange are mentally handicapped, we can develop a much more healthy self concept in those students.

The students who are enrolled on the Project are all mentally handicapped. The majority attend the Social Services Day Centre, Crispin House. There are 180 day clients at Crispin House, most of whom live at home, and 150 of these are enrolled in one or more weekly classes, run either within the Day Centre or in outside sites and branches. Many of these students have attendant physical or sensory handicaps, and the intellectual range runs between able ESN(M) school leavers and multiply physically and mentally handicapped people in the Special Care Unit. The age range of students is from 16 to 65 years.

Subjects which are offered to the students are more and more being dictated by the mentally handicapped people themselves. Each morning there is a

Literacy/Numeracy Workshop, where there is an accent on individual programmes and in which practical survival strategies are stressed. There are four music tutors who offer a programme varying from individual music therapy to composition and improvisation with groups of musicians, depending on the ability of the students involved.

The art and craft curriculum is taught on an individual basis or in groups depending on the need and ability of the students. Specific projects have involved group pottery, mural painting, needlework, making and using puppets and designing sets for the drama group based at the Grange. Several exhibitions of individuals' work have taken place during the past years.

In the Home Economics area both cookery and needlework are taught. Four lunch clubs meet each week; students' participation in these involves travelling to the particular Adult Education Branch on public transport, shopping for the basic ingredients, cooking the meal, eating it in a social group and clearing away. These classes are very popular with students who have formed a long waiting list. Cookery tutors also give support through Cook and Eat classes to FLAT, a group home training flat for mentally handicapped people in Southwark, and to one of the local hostels.

Evening classes are run in conjunction with Southwark MENCAP, and include swimming, keep fit and a new project in which mentally handicapped people are being encouraged to enrol in mainstream classes at a busy Institute branch and are supported by an experienced tutor. This last project is closely modelled on the work being carried out in North London in the Adult Education Integration Project sponsored by MENCAP Metropolitan Region (described by Willis below). In addition, over 25 mentally handicapped people have successfully enrolled in mainstream day or evening classes across the Borough. The classes they have chosen are as varied as weight-lifting, beginners' French, keep fit, dressmaking and adult literacy. Other subjects taught to groups of mentally handicapped people on a 38-week year timetable include yoga, dance and drama. The drama class has spawned an entirely self-motivated drama group which scripts, improvises and acts in its own plays and performs regularly to groups in the local community in addition to mentally handicapped people in other day centres.

TUTORS AND THE INSTITUTE IN GENERAL

Support to tutors is a vital element in the success of the project, and the co-ordinator, full-time and joint funded by Southwark Social Services and the Inner London Education Authority, has a vital role in this. The co-ordinator resources the 50 to 60 classes which take place each week and provides on-the-spot advice and guidance for the 20 tutors. These tutors are also expected to attend a termly tutors' meeting where a professional input from a speech therapist, social worker or similar specialist gives them a greater understanding of the needs of their students. A syllabus covering the proposed

academic year's work is expected from each tutor before commencing each September, and yearly Assessment Forms are submitted on each student's performance in the classes run by the project. Naturally it is important to differentiate between classes which have a training role and are contracted by the Day Centre, where assessment of progress is important, and classes which are open to mentally handicapped students on an open enrolment basis, where such an assessment could actually be a violation of the students' rights and privacy.

Pragmatism has to be one of the main characteristics we look for in employing tutors to work on the Mental Handicap Project, coupled with a level of adaptability in being able to teach one session in a Social Services Special Care Unit, the next in a bustling Adult Education branch and the next in an isolated group home, all at vastly differing levels of comprehension. In this way Adult Education, with its tradition of flexibility and its community oriented approach, is the ideal home for the Project. Attitudes towards handicap are also of paramount importance. Tutors who are new to the project and have little or no experience in working with mentally handicapped students are given an opportunity to visit the Day Centre and other establishments in the Borough in order to get to know the Social Services background of the clients and also their social background. Where possible new tutors spend the first few weeks alongside their retiring or leaving predecessor in the class and with the Social Services instructors in the Day Centre in order to make the contacts and gain the experience necessary for carrying out their teaching effectively. Where progress in basic skills work is somewhat slow and painstaking, we have discovered that the Assessment Form helps enormously in that the tutor is led to see more clearly that progress *is* being made, and to set short-term realisable learning goals for the students. Naturally, with limited resources we have to learn to deploy our tutors effectively, and in the need to prioritise our work we have been led to emphasise the importance of basic skills learning, and survival skills, for our different clients. In general the younger clients, who have had a full education in special schools since ESN(S) schools were established in 1971, are highly motivated individuals who have a great deal of potential and good grounding in basic skills on which to build. The only great drawback with these students is that, as they are fairly newly arrived from a school in which they could have spent 16 years from nursery to leavers' group, they often need to develop a more mature self concept before they can take full advantage of the services which Adult Education branches offer.

In addition to support for the tutors themselves, there is also strong support for the project throughout the Institute. At Academic Board level the Institute has accepted a policy statement which supports the deployment of resources for groups with disability and encourages their integration into the mainstream life and classes of the Institute. Similarly, Heads of Department of Art, Fashion and Crafts, PE and Basic Education/Liberal Studies respectively, have all made contributions of resources and expertise in establishing and

ensuring the continuing health of the Mental Handicap Project. The Principal of the Institute, whose original ideas led to the joint appointment of the project co-ordinator, has managed to give the project the security it needed to grow and mature.

FINANCES AND MATERIALS

Despite the support outlined above, the financial resources available from the ILEA for the equipping of the project and the adaptation of the Grange Arts Centre premises has in no way been sufficient to cover the project's costs. Over the past four years there has been a need to raise £10,000 to cover teaching materials and consumable art materials, a similar amount to fund holidays which have a specifically educational value, and a further £20,000 to cope with the capital costs of alterations and development of the Grange Arts Centre branch. This money has been raised from funds and trusts by both co-ordinator and tutors.

Having discovered that in the Basic Education and Social Skills teaching areas there was a lack of relevant and high quality material for teaching mentally handicapped adults, we have frequently developed our own home-made equipment. Subsequently, with the involvement of organisations such as the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit in the development and distribution of materials for adults with learning disabilities, and the establishment of the ILEA ESN(S) Consortium *, there has been a much wider selection of marketed material to choose from. Many of the students are now successfully using materials developed for general adult literacy teaching, but there is still a lack of material useful for people who have only a basic social sight vocabulary and rudimentary reading skills.

FOSTERING GREATER INDEPENDENCE

The degree of involvement which each student has in classes will depend on his or her needs as expressed to the Adult Education and Social Services workers. Mentally handicapped people who are living or preparing to live in their own accommodation or sheltered housing can often rely heavily on Adult Education to provide both practical support and opportunities to make social contact in the community. The need which mentally handicapped people living in the community feel for leisure time activity can be even more pressing than their need for practical skills, and Adult Education has a very powerful role to play in this area. Making informed choices regarding leisure activities and practising the necessary social skills to survive and fit in to what is essentially a complex social network of adults, are areas of learning which should widen opportunities in the future.

* Jack Tizard School, London, SW6.

The Mental Handicap Project has had a formal involvement with FLAT organisation in Southwark since the project's inception several years ago. The Facility for Living and Assessment Together, a registered charity, was a natural result of the greater educational involvement with mentally handicapped young people of several organisations in the Borough. Its aims are to give mentally handicapped people experience of independent living in small groups, and to assess their educational needs if they are to be able to live in the community with greater independence. Tutors are provided to run daily cook-and-eat classes with the residents when they return from their daytime occupation. The residents are encouraged to seek new areas of independence during their month-long stay. In several cases one of the effects of this experience has been to create additional problems for the young mentally handicapped person when he or she returns home. The transition from seeing oneself and being seen as a dependent child to being an independent and self-motivated young person can be a painful one. It has become one of the maxims of the Mental Handicap Project that education will not have easy and simple results in the short term; there needs to be a great deal of understanding and support on the part of all agencies involved, especially carers and parents, if the educational development of our students is to lead to their greater independence and status as adults.

COMMUNICATION NETWORKS AND CO-OPERATIVE STRATEGIES

Communication between everyone involved is an essential pre-requisite for this type of educational intervention. Pre-visits and follow-up work, in addition to strong parental involvement at management level in the FLAT organisation, have all been essential in the success of training in independent living so far.

Between the Mental Handicap Project itself and the Social Services Day Centre which we service, the following co-operative strategies have been successfully adopted:

- The joint funding of the Project Co-ordinator's post by Southwark Social Services and Southwark AEI;

- An Annual Review of all classes at the end of each summer term, when their educational aims and student composition are discussed with Social Services staff;

- In addition to a contractual obligation to submit a yearly syllabus of work, and a yearly assessment of each student in the class, copies of which go into the student's profile at the Day Centre, each new staff member on the project is discussed with the relevant Centre instructor and manager, and

is programmed to spend some time before taking up their teaching commitment inside the Day Centre, to get to know both staff and students;

- Termly staff meetings about the project are regularly attended by the Day Centre Manager and by all Adult Education tutors;

- The co-ordinator of the project has an opportunity to attend all meetings held at Senior Instructor level within the Day Centre and at senior staff level within Southwark Institute;

- Within the Borough we have established a forum for all educational agencies working with mentally handicapped people, which cover the whole age range; simply as an information exchange this exercise is extremely valuable in ensuring continuity and consistent planning for future needs.

In addition to these formal contacts, informal liaison between tutors and instructors is encouraged. The groups are invited to social events at both establishments, for example, and there have been opportunities for Social Services staff and Adult Education staff to co-teach classes and to attend joint in-service training.

INTEGRATION

Terminology within the area of handicap and disability is often somewhat vague, and integration is a word which appears to be used to cover a very wide variety of initiatives. The location of handicapped people on sites where they are still receiving education in self-contained groups represents one end of a scale, while provision for individuals to join and take a full part in the activities of an adult education class of their own initiative with total involvement both academically and socially is at the other.

Our experience in Southwark has led us to see that in all stages of integration there is a transitional element. On an individual and a group basis, transition with the necessary input of extra support, counselling and an opportunity for individuals to decide they are going too fast too soon without losing face is very important, and again highlights the need for sufficient staff who are skilled in allaying fears, committed to the philosophy of integration and capable of a great deal of lateral and creative thinking in order to solve problems as they arise.

In tackling the integration of handicapped students within the Institute, the support of heads of subject departments and branch tutors in charge (the very essential 'managers' of local community branches whose personalities set the

tone of adult education provision in a particular area) is essential. At the same time we have been led already in our small attempts at integration to question some of our assumptions concerning mainstream adult education. We are forced to acknowledge that at times we create barriers to full participation in Adult Education and offer what we as professionals prefer to give, rather than encourage the students to assess their own learning needs *and* their ability to contribute, and work with us to set up classes on this basis. Sometimes we are aware that the paternalism which affects our attitudes to disabled people is also prevalent in our general educational provision for adults. Greater consultation and sensitivity to student needs, both expressed and hinted at, will be useful pre-requisites for both initiatives in integration and new directions in adult education outreach work in general. A recognition that disabled people have a great deal to say and need us to create the atmosphere in which they can say it may lead to a totally new style of class being developed along a humanitarian path hitherto unexplored. Having said all this, it is important to stress that we are practising teachers whose role is to develop skills and inspire educational enquiry, and *not* social workers. The overlap seems to be that we (alongside other professionals) need to see students as individuals who can work towards their own solutions, be they educational, personal or political, and not as class groups on whom we impose a set of values and solutions which are in grave danger of being totally irrelevant. If we care to adopt this approach to the problem of integration, we may find that we are solving more than the problem of helping disabled people find their rightful place in our society – we may be on the way to a much needed spring cleaning of our traditionally held educational values and practices.

As educational provision for disabled people improves and they have a greater involvement in decision-making processes, our students will gain greater political and social awareness. Some groups of mentally handicapped people have already begun to express such awareness by talking for themselves at meetings, on student committees, at conferences. The American term 'self-advocacy' is often used in this context. Adult Education will undoubtedly have a role to play in this area. Lobbying of the powers that be in order to change the system will similarly demand skills which it is the role of Adult Education initiatives to provide. That is not to say that Adult Education has the responsibility of championing the cause of mentally handicapped people in any directive way. The philosophy must rather be the time-worn one of helping people to realise their own learning needs, and the enterprise must be to direct people's learning goals to support what they wish to achieve in the wider social context, whether this relates to housing, independent living, or social and recreational activities. Helping the disabled people with whom we are associated to manipulate the social and political system to their advantage should be seen as a legitimate role of Adult Educators, as long as they do it alongside and not on the backs of the people they are educating. We will also need to find ways of helping the staff who are unable to accept handicapped people in their classes. A programme of re-educating tutors who have

internalised all the prejudices and fears of society has to proceed hand-in-hand with integration initiatives.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Southwark Adult Education Institute has operated a project for teaching mentally handicapped students for the past five years. Through a great deal of exposure to the Adult Education culture, and an opportunity to work with and alongside students who are not disabled, many mentally handicapped people have been led to develop a more positive self concept and to make decisions of their own regarding their educational and social needs. More severely mentally handicapped people have been enabled to experience a more enhanced quality of life and a much wider range of creative opportunities. We are able to show from many case studies that creative potential is very high in many of our students, and does not have any real correlation with measured IQ or level of social competence.

This process of education, continuing for many years after school leaving age, is an essential pre-requisite if mentally handicapped people are to fulfil their role as adults in society. We have dis covered that mentally handicapped people respond to being treated as adult students and will flourish in an environment where good adult teaching is taking place. Integration has been successfully achieved with many students at the level of social and geographical integration, and with several of the students at a more advanced level. However, if in our steps to integrate disabled people into mainstream work we do not re-examine existing attitudes and practices in general, then a golden opportunity to revitalise and re-humanise our adult education system will be lost.

9

The Integration of Mentally Handicapped People into Adult Education

Penny Willis

INTRODUCTION

It is increasingly accepted that it is desirable for people who are mentally handicapped to use the same services as the rest of the community. For instance the Russell Report (1973) on adult education recommended that more positive effort be directed toward the disadvantaged, including mentally handicapped people:

'...the objective should be, whenever possible, to integrate the members of such groups into the full life of the community and not to segregate them longer than is necessary.' (p.93 para.280-1)

However, it can be difficult for people who are mentally handicapped to take full advantage of community resources. Cheseldine and Jeffree (1981) found that the leisure activities most frequently reported among mentally handicapped adolescents were passive, solitary and/or family oriented, the exception being attendance at social clubs specifically for the handicapped. There could be many reasons for this sparse use of community leisure facilities by people who are mentally handicapped. They may not want to use them, or may not know what is available. The use of community resources may require knowledge and skills that they have not yet acquired.

The Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults (MENCAP) was concerned that the potential contribution of adult education to the social and educational integration of the more severely mentally handicapped was not being fully realised. A steering group consisting of representatives from adult education, social services and MENCAP was set up by MENCAP Metropolitan Region (in June 1980) in order to discuss the question of integration. Two 'models' or ways of organising integration were identified and it was decided to investigate the feasibility of these two approaches. The Thomas Coram Research Unit was invited to undertake an independent evaluation of the two models, and a research proposal was developed by Chris Kiernan and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust. A full-time co-ordinator was appointed with funds from MENCAP National Society. The co-ordinator was to work in conjunction with two

adult education centres in the setting-up and running of the two models. The centres selected had no existing classes for mentally handicapped people (excluding outreach). Both models use volunteer students paired with handicapped students but they differ significantly in their relationship to existing mainstream provision. The first model involved the provision of 'separate' classes for the handicapped and volunteer students. These evening classes were held within the Hillingdon Adult Education Centre. An art and craft class was offered for the first year; in the second year a cookery class was offered as well. The second model involved the attendance of a maximum of two handicapped students and their volunteers at ordinary classes within the Islington Adult Education Institute. A range of subjects was taken by the handicapped students including dressmaking, swimming, keep fit, painting and pottery. Most of the classes were held in the evening.

The difference between the two models can be described in terms of the type and degree of integration they entailed. The separate classes were physically located within the adult education centres. These classes were socially integrated to the extent that they were made up of half non-handicapped volunteer students and half handicapped students. The opportunities for the handicapped students to meet other non-handicapped attenders depended on coffee-time arrangements and the siting of the class.

The mainstream classes were a less sheltered environment for the handicapped students since they consisted of people who did not enrol in the knowledge that handicapped people would be attending. Since the proportion of handicapped students was much lower than in the separate classes, there were more opportunities to meet students who were not handicapped.

The two types of classes ran for two academic years from September 1981. The two adult education centres have now taken over completely the running of the schemes including the recruitment of volunteer students.

THE RESEARCH COMPONENT

The research aimed to monitor the development and running of the project, highlighting the main issues that arose. Its prime focus was upon the social integration of the handicapped students into adult education. The research maintained a separate identity from the practical and organisational aspects of the project; these were dealt with by the MENCAP co-ordinator.

At least 10 handicapped students were included in the research for both areas in each of the two years, giving a total of 20 from the separate classes and 23 from the mainstream classes. The volunteer students who were paired with these handicapped students made up the sample of volunteers. Fifteen tutors were involved in the research in the Islington mainstream classes. Four of these tutors were included in the research for both years because handicapped students were attending their classes. There were two tutors for the Hillingdon

separate classes. (There were two art and craft tutors during the first year. The original tutor left after the first term and has not been included in the research sample.) The cookery tutor was involved for one year with six students from the research sample and the art and craft tutor had a total of 14 students from the research sample in her class over the two years.

The research methods included interviewing everyone involved in the project, that is, the handicapped and volunteer students, tutors, social services staff, adult education staff and parents. The co-ordinator kept a detailed daily diary throughout the project to aid the evaluation. The research officer visited the classes in order to observe the social interaction within the classes using a structured observation schedule. A postal survey was undertaken to ascertain the opinions of the other students about the scheme. This paper will concentrate on the information gained through the interviews; other aspects of the research will be reported elsewhere.

THE PROCESS OF SETTING UP THE SCHEME

The co-ordinator discussed the project with people involved in services for mentally handicapped people, adult education and volunteer agencies to help determine the most appropriate ways of setting up the schemes. Once the boroughs in which the project was to be based were identified, the co-ordinator was able to consult staff in the adult education and social services departments concerned.

The recruitment of volunteer students began during the summer. Volunteers were not expected to have previous experience with handicapped people or in the subject they wished to attend. The co-ordinator explained the aims of the project to prospective volunteers and introductory volunteer meetings were held. References were taken up on all volunteers.

The co-ordinator recruited the handicapped students through the day centres for mentally handicapped people. As far as possible, the co-ordinator established that the students wished to attend adult education classes and discussed with them which subject they would like. The handicapped and volunteer students were matched on choice of subject and convenience of travel arrangements. Where possible each student was paired with a volunteer who was in the same age group. The volunteer and handicapped students were introduced to each other by the co-ordinator, usually at the handicapped student's home.

In Islington, some of the tutors volunteered to have handicapped students in their class when they heard that the project was taking place. If no tutor volunteered for the class that a handicapped student was interested in the co-ordinator approached the tutor to see if he or she would agree to take part. The two tutors who took the separate classes in Hillingdon were already taking ordinary classes within the Adult Education Centre. The tutors'

preparation consisted of individual discussions with the co-ordinator and in addition, some tutors were able to attend introductory meetings.

THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

The sample of handicapped students covered a wide age range, from 19 to 60 years, although the majority were under 40. There were 16 men and 27 women in the sample. Twenty-five of the handicapped students lived at home, the remaining 18 in local authority hostels and group homes.

The project was aimed at those students who would be unable to attend classes without the help of a volunteer. The Adaptive Behaviour Scales (Nihira et al 1975) were completed for each student by the staff at the day centres. These revealed that the sample covered a wide range of ability, including students with severe deficiencies. The scales give detailed individual profiles that are difficult to summarise, but 20 of the students could not make minor purchases without supervision and six were unable to speak in simple sentences. Fifteen of the students were unable to use public transport for familiar journeys.

The day centres were asked to recommend only those students who were likely to behave appropriately in adult education classes. Some of the students had behaviour problems, but in most cases these were not found to be disruptive by the tutors.

The significance of different handicaps and behaviours should be considered in relation to the relevant setting. The tutors were asked what abilities a student should have in order to participate in their class. The majority of tutors said students did not require extensive verbal skills (14 out of 17), but restricted verbal ability may be more of a handicap in craft subjects than in activities such as keep-fit and swimming. Tutors said that students should be able to follow simple instructions and, in most subjects, being able to concentrate or be quiet for short periods of time was felt to be important. When asked about physical handicaps most of the tutors said that the ability to participate would depend on the exact nature of the handicap and the suitability of the site where the class was held. Reasonable use of hands was felt to be important by nearly all tutors of craft subjects. Reasonable eyesight was required by tutors of physical activity classes, as much teaching was by demonstration.

Each student was included in the research sample for one year, during which time they were interviewed twice about their leisure activities and enjoyment of the classes. The parents or hostel staff were also interviewed for supplementary information. The main leisure activity outside the home for the handicapped students was attendance at clubs specifically for the handicapped. Twenty-eight out of the 43 students went to a club at least once a week. Only 14 of the students said that they went regularly to the cinema or out for a drink.

The level of attendance of the handicapped students was high in both types of classes. Nearly all of the students were registered as present for 80 per cent or more of the classes that were held after they began attending (39 of 43). (These figures do not include four students who were excluded from the research sample when they left their classes before the end of the year.)

Over half of the handicapped students had some experience of the subject they were attending since leaving school (28 of 43). Whether the student was able to carry on with the activity at home depended to an extent on the subject; for example, pottery was more difficult to do at home than cookery. Over half of the students did do their subject at home (25 of 43). This includes five who had no previous experience of the subject, indicating that the class provided them with a new interest that could be continued at home.

Half of the students said they found the classes easy (21 of 43); nine found the class hard and the remaining nine who replied said that they found some things hard and some things easy. The communicative abilities of four students were too limited for them to reply to these open questions. When asked what they liked about the class, all but one of the students who replied made positive comments. The students were also asked what they did not like about the class; the majority said there was nothing they did not like (30 of 43), but nine students did mention something. Some of the comments were that the class was tiring, that they had to wait too long for help and that transport arrangements did not suit them.

Parents and hostel staff were asked whether they thought that the student enjoyed attending the classes and nearly all said they did (40 of 43). In all except three cases they said that they thought that the student had benefitted. In many cases the students were said to have improved both in learning skills and socially. The majority of the volunteer students also felt that the handicapped students with whom they had attended classes had learnt something. The tutors felt that most of the students had made some or great improvement in the skill being taught (34 of 43).

Eight parents and hostel staff said they had experienced difficulties relating to the classes. Most of these difficulties concerned the timing of the class or of the volunteer's arrival.

Integration into adult education was felt to be a good idea by nearly all parents and hostel staff. The five people who had reservations were concerned about the acceptance of handicapped students by other students. No clear differences emerged between the mainstream and the separate classes in any of the areas discussed above.

In Islington 19 of the 23 students continued for a second year, some in new classes and several attending more than one class. Four of these students were attending the class without a volunteer and a further four students were travelling to the class independently. In Hillingdon, 19 of the 20 students continued for a second year, two attending mainstream classes.

THE VOLUNTEER STUDENTS

The volunteer students completed an initial questionnaire and were interviewed after they had been involved in the scheme for around five months. There was a brief final interview carried out over the telephone at the end of the academic year. A total of 53 volunteers attended classes at some time with the handicapped students. (Eleven of these were involved for a short period of time or acted as reserves, going to the class when the main volunteer could not attend. They have not been included in the analysis.) The number of volunteers is one less than the number of handicapped students because one volunteer participated in both years, attending classes with a different student each year.

Volunteers were recruited from several different sources in both areas. The most productive methods of recruitment in Hillingdon were a note in the Adult Education prospectus, publicity at the centre's branches and posters in local libraries. In Islington most success was achieved from the use of local media, approaches to colleges and publicity at the Institute branches. In three cases the volunteers were recruited through direct requests to the classes that the handicapped students wanted to attend.

Recruiting the required number of volunteer students presented some difficulties, particularly as this needed to take place over the summer for the project to start at the beginning of the academic year. Sufficient volunteer students were found, but because of recruitment problems several of the handicapped students in Islington did not start their classes until a few weeks after the beginning of term.

The majority of the volunteers were women (38 of 42). They covered a wide age range but, like the handicapped students, the largest proportion was in the under 40 age group. Approximately half of the volunteer students were in full-time employment (24). In the 'separate' class sample, all those who were not employed were housewives or retired, while in the 'mainstream' sample most of the non-employed volunteers were full-time students.

Seventeen of the volunteer students had very little or no previous contact with mentally handicapped people. Five volunteers had previous contact with mentally handicapped people through their occupation or training. The remaining 20 volunteers had done some voluntary work with mentally handicapped people and/or had a mentally handicapped relative or friend.

The volunteers were asked why they had become involved and a variety of reasons were given. Many were planning to go to an adult education class before they heard about the project and it seemed a good idea to help someone else to attend (28). Some volunteers had a particular interest in gaining experience with mentally handicapped people because it was relevant to their present or possible future occupation.

The way volunteer students see their role has implications for the relationship between the volunteer and the handicapped student and for the way the handicapped student is perceived by other students. Are they two students learning together, or is the volunteer student required to help the handicapped student within the class? If the volunteers see their role as that of an 'aide' to the tutor then they will probably expect to give the handicapped student more assistance than if they see themselves as a fellow student or friend.

The volunteers were given a series of terms that could be used to describe the volunteer's role and asked whether they agreed with each description. The volunteers generally agreed that it was their role to be a friend to the handicapped student, to help them get to the class and assist within the class if needed. They also saw it as part of the volunteer's role to be a social link for the student and to learn about mental handicap themselves. Most of the volunteers did not see themselves as teachers, preferring to describe themselves as helpers/enablers (34) and aides to the tutors (31).

The volunteers may differ in the relative emphasis they put upon the terms teacher, helper/enabler and aide to the tutor, and in their understanding of what they mean in practice. Consequently, they were asked what type of help, if any, they gave to the handicapped student. More than half said that they gave some practical help within the class (26). The role of the volunteer student was affected by several factors including the types of subject attended, the abilities of the handicapped and volunteer students in that subject, and the expectations of the tutor regarding the volunteer.

The tutors were asked how they saw the role of the volunteer students. Most of the tutors said that the volunteer students were in a helping and not a teaching relationship with the handicapped student (11 of 17). There were some exceptions to this, four of the Islington tutors saying that the volunteers did occasionally play a teaching role. Two tutors argued that volunteers were fellow students and not helpers within the class. Nearly all thought it was important that the volunteer was interested in learning the subject (16). Most of the tutors thought that it was not necessary for volunteers to have previous experience with mentally handicapped people.

The co-ordinator arranged general meetings for the volunteers at least once a term in each of the two areas. The tutors were also invited. Various topics were covered at these meetings including the historical development of mental handicap services, communication difficulties and the role of the volunteer. There was an emphasis at the volunteer meetings on the importance of the handicapped student being encouraged to act as independently as possible. These meetings were an opportunity for volunteers to learn about the aims of the project and to discuss any issues that had arisen. Nearly all of the volunteers (39) and 12 of the tutors attended at least one of these meetings.

Thirty-four of the volunteer students in the sample went to 80 per cent or more of the classes that were held after they started attending. The attendance

levels of handicapped students were somewhat higher. Not all were dependent on the volunteer to help them get to the class. In Hillingdon some of the handicapped students travelled to the class with a different volunteer, and other volunteers could provide any assistance that was needed within the class. Reserve volunteers were also available in Hillingdon to attend the class when the main volunteer was unable to go. There were few reserve volunteers in Islington, and this meant that on occasion the small number of handicapped students who travelled to the class independently would attend without their volunteer. This raised the possibility that some of the handicapped students did not need a volunteer. Tutors said that this was acceptable to them if the student could get to the class and manage reasonably independently within the class. Some tutors felt that handicapped students benefitted from having a volunteer for an introductory period.

When the volunteers were asked what difficulties they had experienced there was a wide range of answers and some mentioned more than one difficulty. Few volunteers had experienced no difficulties. Twelve of the volunteer students said they had found it difficult to attend the volunteer meetings. Fifteen said that there had been problems relating to the behaviour of the handicapped student. These problems were mostly minor in nature, like lack of concentration on work or talking too much in class. Twelve volunteers said that they had transport difficulties or that the journey was awkward. Seven volunteers found that not having a reserve presented some difficulties. Nine volunteers said that they had experienced problems communicating with the handicapped student. Despite these difficulties over half of the volunteer students said they were planning to continue to be involved for a second year (26). Those volunteers who said they would not be continuing gave reasons relating exclusively to changes in their personal circumstances.

The volunteers were asked how they felt that they had benefitted from attending the classes. The responses were similar in both areas. Several volunteers mentioned more than one benefit. Most of the volunteers said that they had learnt something about the subject or were fitter (38). Thirty-nine of the volunteers said that they now had a better knowledge and/or understanding of people with mental handicap. Over half said that they had enjoyed the social contact within the classes.

THE TUTORS

Only five out of the 17 tutors involved in the project had any previous teaching contact with mentally handicapped students and seven had no previous contact with mentally handicapped people. Some of the Islington tutors explained to their classes that the handicapped and volunteer students would be attending (eight of 15).

The handicapped students worked on the same tasks as the other students in the classes. In the craft classes the projects undertaken by the handicapped

students were occasionally at a more basic level than other students. All of the volunteer students in the craft subjects produced their own pieces of work and in the fitness classes all the volunteers participated in the exercises. The 10 tutors of mainstream classes in the second year were asked if they thought the handicapped students were treated any differently by the rest of the class. Most of these tutors felt that some of the other students took a particular interest and gave encouragement to the handicapped student (eight of 10).

It may not be desirable or practical for there to be much variation in the tutor's usual way of working with a class or in the amount of attention each student receives because a handicapped student is present. Most of the tutors said they had found they needed to give different kinds of advice to the handicapped student from that given to other students (15 of 17). However, all of the tutors in the mainstream classes said that the handicapped students required either no more time than other students or that only a little more attention was required.

Tutors were asked about any difficulties they had experienced with the project. Difficulties relating to teaching aspects, such as students following instructions, were reported by seven tutors. Four tutors said that the behaviour of the handicapped students had presented some difficulties, relating mainly to the need to keep quiet at various times. Three tutors said that the volunteer's absence when the student attended was a problem, and one tutor had experienced changes of volunteer during the year. To assess the significance of these difficulties tutors were asked whether they had any concerns about the scheme. Many of the tutors had no reservations about the project (10 of 17) but the remaining seven tutors expressed concerns regarding the selection of appropriate students. All of the tutors involved in the project said they would be prepared to have students who are mentally handicapped in their classes in future.

CONCLUSION

The project ran successfully for two years and generated sufficient interest and commitment from the agencies involved for it to become a normal component of provision by the two centres. Interviews with the handicapped and volunteer students indicate that they generally enjoyed attending the classes and that they gained benefits in terms of learning and social contact. Both models of integration involved pairing of handicapped and volunteer students and in many cases friendships developed to include contacts in addition to that on the class evening. The tutors were happy to continue their involvement with the project.

While no clear differences emerged from the interview data between the two models, the mainstream model provided a much less sheltered environment for the handicapped student. It also offered opportunities for other students in the classes, who may have had no previous contact with mentally handicapped

people, to meet and work alongside them. Another feature of the mainstream model was that classes did not need to be specifically set up and so the handicapped students could choose from a broader range of subjects. There are other important differences between the two approaches. For example, diary data indicates that for the same number of handicapped students placed, the mainstream model requires substantially more co-ordinator time as there are more tutors and branches involved. This and other aspects of the research findings are reported elsewhere (Willis and Kiernan, 1984).

There are several ways in which the mainstream and separate class models could be conceptualised. One approach would be to suggest that the separate class model is either for students whose needs cannot be met within the mainstream or whose behaviour is not seen as appropriate. The aim may be for students in separate classes to progress to mainstream classes. Alternatively, the separate class model could be used for subject areas, such as life skills, which are not offered in mainstream classes. The volunteer students will be less likely to be fellow students within such subject areas. Most of the day centre staff interviewed felt that the mainstream model was preferable since it involved classes used by other members of the community. However, they said that the type of class or level of volunteer involvement that was suitable in particular cases would depend upon the needs of the individual involved and on the subject area.

The two approaches to integration described are among a range of ways that mentally handicapped people can attend adult education classes. Many students who are described as mentally handicapped will not need the support of a volunteer or will require only a small amount of assistance with certain aspects like enrolment. Provision for handicapped students in adult education also includes special classes that do not involve volunteers. The current scheme was aimed at the more severely mentally handicapped students who were unable to attend without the assistance of a volunteer student. However, by the end of the year several of the handicapped students were travelling independently. This illustrates that it is difficult to predict need from gross diagnostic classification. Whether or not a student can attend a particular class without volunteer assistance will depend on the particular circumstances of the student and class. For example, the class may be located very close to a particular student's home making it possible for him or her to get there independently or a particular class may make demands of such a nature that the student is able to cope without assistance. Volunteer involvement may be viewed either as a more or less permanent support or as a temporary introductory one. If students receive help they do not need there is a danger of creating a dependency on the volunteer. Hence the level and duration of volunteer support should depend on the needs of the individual student.

There are various possible roles the volunteer can play within classes. These range from the volunteer acting as a tutor's assistant to being purely a fellow student. The various roles have different implications for the experiences of the handicapped student within the class. The role the volunteer plays within

any particular class will be affected by many factors including the subject attended, the handicapped and volunteer students' abilities in that subject, the advice and training the volunteer has received and the tutors' expectations regarding the volunteer. However within these considerations, it should be possible to encourage one view of the volunteer's role in preference to another depending on which role is seen as most desirable. Wertheimer (1983) argues that there need to be more opportunities for activities that free mental handicapped people from being the 'helped'.

There are two main areas of potential benefit to the handicapped students from attendance at adult education classes. The first relates to the learning of particular skills or knowledge involved in a subject. The second is the widening of leisure activities and social contacts. It is not possible to differentiate completely between these two aspects, particularly as many of the subjects attended are considered to be leisure activities and some of the peripheral things students do, like buying coffee, may have educational aspects for the handicapped student. However, which of these areas is considered to be primary will have implications for the direction of future developments of this type of scheme. If learning of the subject is considered most important then the emphasis could be upon in-service training for tutors. Volunteers may then be seen as an aide to the tutor, perhaps extending the range of subjects to areas like literacy and numeracy.

The majority of adult education classes are held during the evening and as such are a leisure time activity which has an educational element. If the social and leisure oriented aspects are seen as desirable then volunteers could also be involved in facilitating the use by handicapped people of any other community leisure services they are interested in. This could be purely for enjoyment or it may also have an educational aspect, particularly if the aim is that given by Gathercole (1981, p7) for the leisure volunteer 'to help the client towards eventually being able to organise his leisure time without the help of the volunteer'.

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10

The Copewell Curriculum: Development, Content and Use

Edward Whelan, Barbara Speake, and Thomas Strickland

BACKGROUND TO THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum presented in this paper has been developed during the course of the Habilitation Technology Project at the Hester Adrian Research Centre, University of Manchester. This was a six year programme of research funded by the DHSS (1977-1983) and arose directly out of previous work on the five year Habilitation Research Project also funded by the DHSS (1972-1977). The Habilitation Research Project had primarily involved a detailed study of the work of Adult Training Centres and culminated in the publication of the First National Survey of ATCs (Whelan and Speake, 1977).

One of the major findings of the National Survey was the small extent to which research findings concerned with effective methods of teaching the mentally handicapped were being applied within ATCs. Between 67 per cent and 78 per cent of ATCs relied mostly on unstructured methods of teaching many skills which they had rated as 'important' or 'very important', on a five-point scale. This was particularly true in the area of social skills. These were mainly taught just as the opportunity arose and staff were usually unaware of the availability of special techniques for teaching such skills. Indeed, there was evidence of a lack of opportunities for staff even to share their own experience with colleagues involved in similar work. This may partly explain why the assessed attainments of trainees showed that many of them lacked precisely those skills which are likely to be critical to successful functioning in the community. Nevertheless, there was strong evidence from the survey of a growing professional awareness among staff, and a wish to consolidate and extend the specialist skills needed to teach mentally handicapped adults.

Our main conclusion from the National Survey of ATCs was that there was an urgent need for a follow-up programme of research and development having the following general aims:

1. To continue to identify areas where mentally handicapped and developmentally delayed adolescents and adults experience learning or motivational problems and have difficulty in coping.

2. To evaluate existing technology and to develop new technology, both materials and methods, for specific habilitation purposes.

3. To develop effective methods of dissemination, ensuring that research is applied to practice in both the short term and long term.

4. To help ATC staff to develop their professional skills in the light of current developments in services for mentally handicapped adolescents and adults.

The ultimate goal of the Project has been the development of

'a comprehensive set of habilitation packages available, thoroughly evaluated and in use in the field by practitioners'.

In order to fulfil this goal, the Project has operated an *action research* approach. We believe that this has been an effective method of applying research to practice. The essence of the action research approach is establishing a collaborative network. In the case of the Project, this network has consisted of four essential components:

1. The Adult Training Centre Manager attached to the Project. From the Project's inception, Tom Strickland, a former ATC Manager, was involved in all aspects of the Project's design and functioning. But his major responsibility was to form a link with the field to help monitor the application of packages and to feed back to his research colleagues how the packages were being received by the Centres.

2. The Management Consultancy Group. This consisted of 10 Adult Training Centre Managers who represented over 100 ATCs within a 50 mile radius of the University. The Group functioned as a steering committee and a 'think tank' for the Project. They determined matters of policy as well as taking an active part in the development of the teaching packages.

3. The Field Trials Panel. This was a group of 30 representative ATCs who agreed to try out teaching packages developed by the Project. They were also involved in the first stage of the design of packages and carried out baseline assessments of trainees taking part in the evaluation.

4. Satellite Centres. Approximately 30 Centres from several different parts of England and Wales collaborated with the project in the initial stages of package development (see description of their role later). These Centres also helped to ensure that the ideas contained in packages were deeply rooted in practitioner experience.

THE COPEWELL SYSTEM

During the early meetings of the Management Consultancy Group, considerable discussion took place about the main difficulties experienced by mentally handicapped individuals attending Adult Training Centres and those faced by the staff working with them. Several areas of knowledge and skill that needed to be taught were identified. Common concerns emerging related to assessment methods and record keeping and to teaching – how individual teaching priorities could be determined and in what sequence different skills should be taught.

After many meetings and consultation with their colleagues, the Group and the Project Team decided that the best strategy for developing the series of teaching packages specified as the ultimate goal of the research would be, first of all, to generate a comprehensive curriculum. Each curriculum item would then, in turn, become a package topic itself. The curriculum would become the first essential component of a new teaching system which would also incorporate assessment and recording components and embody sound teaching principles derived from both research and practice.

It was agreed that the overall system should be known as the 'Copewell System', described as follows:

The Copewell System is designed as a basic tool for teacher-instructors working with mentally handicapped adolescents and adults. Its basis is a complete curriculum, divided into four sections: Self Help, Social Academic, Interpersonal, and Vocational. The system consists of three elements: a *file box* (containing the complete set of 174 numbered curriculum cards, grouped into subject areas within each of the four sections), 174 corresponding *teaching packages* teaching plans plus visual aids; and a *recording system* for individual trainees.

The three parts of the Copewell System will now be described in turn. They are

the curriculum

the teaching packages

the assessment and recording materials

The curriculum

In designing the curriculum, account was taken of work currently taking place in special schools and in further and adult education colleges. This together with a study of the literature influenced the content and terminology used in the curriculum. The curriculum is divided into four main sections:

Self help	The basic skills that an individual must acquire in order to care for and maintain him/herself both at home and in the community. These also include skills which allow a person to seek out and use community resources.
Social academic	Aspects of the more traditional educational or academic skills, geared to functioning in the community.
Interpersonal	Those skills which enable a person to enter into meaningful and fulfilling relationships with individuals or groups in the community.
Vocational	The work-related skills, habits and attitudes which are critical to successful adjustment to work.

The *Self help* section contains seven major curriculum areas (numbered 1-7): hygiene, dress, appearance, first aid/health, domestic skills, community skills and leisure. Within these seven areas, there are 73 individual curriculum objectives.

The *Social academic* section contains eight major areas (numbered 8-15): communication, numeracy, literacy, writing, money, time, telephone and colour. There are 47 specific teaching objectives.

The *Interpersonal* section contains four major areas (numbered 16-19): bodily awareness, personal knowledge, social interaction and social responsibility. These contain 22 teaching objectives.

Finally the *Vocational* section consists of six major areas: work skills, work habits, work relationships, work attitudes, work independence and job seeking. These areas are numbered 20-25 and contain 32 objectives. The individual objectives which comprise the system are presented in the next section. As can be seen, each objective is assigned a number which links objectives together within the different areas as described above.

Self help

1. *Hygiene*
   - 1.1 Washing hands
     Recognises when hands need washing, is able to collect necessary resources, and washes hands thoroughly without help or prompts.
   - 1.2 Washing face, neck and ears
     Recognises when face, neck and ears should be washed, is able to

collect necessary resources, and washes face, neck and ears thoroughly without help or prompts.

1.3 Bathing
Is aware of when bathing is necessary, is able to collect the resources required and bathes self without help or prompts.

1.4 Taking a shower
Recognises when a shower is required, is able to collect necessary resources and showers self without help or prompts.

1.5 Washing feet
Recognises when feet need washing, is able to collect the necessary resources, and washes feet thoroughly without help or prompts.

1.6 Washing and drying hair
Recognises when hair needs washing and drying, is able to collect the necessary resources, and washes and dries hair thoroughly without help or prompts.

1.7 Cleaning teeth
Recognises when teeth need to be cleaned, is able to collect necessary resources and cleans teeth thoroughly, when necessary, without help or prompts.

1.8 Use of toilet (domestic)
Is aware of own need to use a toilet and is able to use a domestic toilet without help or prompts.

1.9 Use of toilet (public)
Is able to locate a public toilet appropriate to own sex, and uses it without help.

1.10 Menstrual hygiene
Is aware of and exercises appropriate hygiene during menstruation.

1.11 Washing clothes (by hand)
Identifies clothes which need to be (or may be) hand washed, is able to collect the necessary resources and washes clothes by hand without help or prompts.

1.12 Washing clothes (by machine)
Is able to select clothes which may be washed by machine and is able to operate the machine without help.

1.13 Using a launderette
Is able to carry out the operations involved in using a launderette.

2. *Dress*

2.1 Selection of clothing
Is able to locate and select own clothing appropriate to intended activity and weather conditions.

2.2 Dressing (male)
Is able to dress without help or prompts.

2.3 Dressing (female)
Is able to dress without help or prompts.

2.4 Undressing (male)
Is able to undress without help or prompts.

2.5 Undressing (female)
Is able to undress without help or prompts.

3. *Appearance*

3.1 Hair grooming
Recognises when hair needs grooming, is able to collect necessary resources, and combs or brushes hair thoroughly without help or prompts.

3.2 Shaving (males), using a dry razor
Recognises when he needs to shave, is able to collect necessary resources for shaving and shaves properly without help or prompts.

3.3 Shaving (males), using a wet razor
Recognises when he needs to shave, is able to collect necessary resources for shaving and shaves properly without help or prompts.

3.4 Shaving (females)
Decides whether shaving is required or desired, collects the necessary resources and shaves self properly without help or prompts.

3.5 Care of nails (hands and feet)
Recognises when nails on hands or feet need attention, collects the necessary resources and is able to care for nails without help or prompts.

3.6 Use of make-up
Is able to decide whether to wear make-up, is able to collect the necessary resources, and applies make-up properly, without help or prompts.

3.7 Posture
Is aware of and maintains good posture.

3.8 Use of iron
Recognises when articles of clothing need ironing, is able to collect the necessary resources, and irons them thoroughly without help or prompts.

3.9 Repair of clothing
Recognises when simple clothing repair is necessary, collects the resources required and repairs the clothing without help or prompts.

3.10 Awareness of fashion and accessories
Is aware of current fashions in both clothing and accessories and is able to use this knowledge according to own personal preference.

4. *First Aid/Health*

4.1 Handling emergencies
Recognises an emergency situation and is able to decide upon the appropriate action to be taken.

4.2 Dealing with simple injuries

Recognises a simple injury, and is able to decide upon the appropriate action to be taken.

4.3 Dealing with minor ailments
Recognises a minor ailment and is able to decide upon the appropriate action to be taken.

4.4 Use of, and co-operation with, medical services
Can identify the various medical services available, uses them as necessary and co-operates in following prescribed treatments.

4.5 Recognition of health hazards
Recognises potential health hazards and measures which may be taken to avoid them.

4.6 Recognition of physical danger
Recognises potential sources of physical danger and knows how these may be avoided.

4.7 Correct use and storage of noxious substances
Recognises noxious substances and their dangers, uses them safely where needed, and stores them correctly.

4.8 Attention to balanced diet and weight
Recognises the need for a balanced diet and uses this knowledge to observe healthy eating and drinking habits. Is also aware of appropriate weight for self, and adjusts diet according to weight requirements.

4.9 Sensible use of intoxicants
Recognises intoxicants and uses them sensibly and appropriately as desired.

5. *Domestic Skills*

5.1 Preparation of shopping list
Is able to prepare a shopping list for food and other domestic requirements.

5.2 Storage of food and drink
Is aware of appropriate ways of storing various kinds of food and drink and acts accordingly.

5.3 Use of utensils and gadgets for food preparation
Recognises the various utensils and gadgets available for food preparation and can use them appropriately.

5.4 Preparation of cold drinks
Knows the different types of cold drink and can prepare them without help or prompts.

5.5 Preparation of hot drinks
Knows what resources are needed for preparing a range of hot drinks and can make any of them safely without help or prompts.

5.6 Preparation of simple snacks (no cooking required)
Knows what types of snacks may be prepared without cooking, is able to assemble the necessary ingredients and resources and makes simple snack(s) without help or prompts.

5.7 Using a cooker
Is able to use various kinds of domestic cooker and does so safely and appropriately without help or prompts.

5.8 Preparation of simple snacks (involving cooking)
Is able to assemble the ingredients and other resources needed for making a range of simple snacks, involving cooking, and can prepare any of them without help or prompts.

5.9 Cooking a typical meal (not requiring a recipe)
Is able to collect the necessary resources and cook a typical meal without help or prompts.

5.10 Setting the table
Is able to collect necessary resources, and sets the table appropriately without help or supervision.

5.11 Use of correct cutlery
Recognises appropriate cutlery to be used in different situations and is able to use cutlery correctly without help or prompts.

5.12 Acceptable table habits
Is aware of and displays acceptable table habits.

5.13 Clearing table
Recognises when the table needs clearing and is able to do this without help or prompts, avoiding spillage or breakages.

5.14 Washing up
Is able to collect necessary resources and washes up without help or prompts.

5.15 Changing and making the bed
Recognises when a bed needs to be changed or made, is able to collect the necessary resources, and changes or makes the bed properly without help or prompts.

5.16 Simple housework
Recognises the need for various types of simple housework, is able to collect the necessary resources and to carry out the housework without help or prompts.

5.17 Use of electrical equipment in the home
Is able to use various kinds of electrical equipment found within the home safely without help or prompts.

5.18 Maintenance of the home environment
Is aware of the importance of maintaining the home environment and can decide upon the appropriate action to be taken without help or prompts.

6. *Community Skills*

6.1 Road safety
Is aware of road safety procedures and observes these correctly without help or prompts.

6.2 Knowledge of neighbourhood
Is familiar with the geography of local neighbourhood, knows the location of various amenities, and can find them.

6.3 Recognition of function of different types of shop
Recognizes the functions of different shops and is able to use them appropriately without help or prompts.

6.4 Shopping
Is able to shop appropriately without help or prompts.

6.5 Use of bus
Is able to use a bus both for familiar and new journeys without needing to be accompanied.

6.6 Use of rail services
Is able to make a journey by rail to a familiar or unfamiliar destination without needing to be accompanied.

6.7 Use of hire services for transport
Knows how to use transport hire services and does so without help or prompts.

6.8 Recognition of function of different types of community services and amenities
Is aware of the functions of different types of community services and amenities.

6.9 Use of Post Office
Knows when and how to use a Post Office and does so when necessary without help or prompts.

6.10 Use of bank
Knows when and how to use a bank and does so when appropriate without help or prompts.

6.11 Use of community amenities
Knows the various amenities available in the locality and uses them appropriately without help or prompts.

6.12 Use of cafe or restaurant (self-service)
Recognises when a self-service system is operating in a cafe or restaurant and is able to use it without help or prompts.

6.13 Use of cafe or restaurant (waiter service)
Recognises when a waiter service is operating in a cafe or restaurant and is able to use this correctly without help or prompts.

6.14 Seeking help or advice
Recognises when it is necessary to seek help or advice and can contact the appropriate source without help or prompts.

7. *Leisure*

7.1 Use of leisure in the home
Is aware of, and can select from a variety of leisure activities which may be pursued at home and occupies leisure time according to personal interests.

7.2 Knowledge of local leisure facilities
Has a knowledge of the range of leisure facilities which are available in the local community.

7.3 Use of local leisure facilities
Uses local leisure facilities in accordance with personal interests

observing any regulations or requirements which may be involved without need for help or prompts.

7.4 Club membership
Is aware of some of the activities offered by various clubs and can exercise choice in applying for membership, following the rules and participating according to degree of personal interest.

Social academic

8. *Communication*

8.1 Communication by signs or symbols
Is able to communicate by means of a recognized sign or symbol system.

8.2 Speech production
Produces clear speech and can be understood by strangers.

8.3 Linguistic ability
Has an adequate vocabulary and speaks in sentences, following basic rules of grammar.

8.4 Conversational ability
Is able to carry on a conversation and does so appropriately.

8.5 Expression of feelings
Is able to express feelings without prompts at the appropriate time, and in an appropriate manner.

8.6 Expression of opinions
Is able to express opinions without prompts at the appropriate time, and in an appropriate manner.

8.7 Discussion of current affairs
Is aware of items of national or local interest and is able to take part in a discussion about them with others, as desired.

9. *Numeracy*

9.1 Pre-numeracy skills
Is able to match quantities and place objects in one to one correspondence.

9.2 Number recognition and printing
Recognises and can print single numerals and combinations of numerals.

9.3 Counting
Knows the correct sequence of numbers and can use this to determine the quantity of items presented to him.

9.4 Measuring
Is able to use a rule or tape measure to determine the dimensions of an object or the distance between two points.

9.5 Weighing
Is able to weigh various objects using the necessary equipment.

9.6 Addition
Is able to add numbers and to make use of addition in everyday

situations.

9.7 Subtraction
Is able to subtract numbers and to make use of subtraction in everyday situations.

9.8 Multiplication
Is able to carry out simple multiplication of single and double numbers.

9.9 Division
Is able to carry out simple division of double and single numbers.

10. *Literacy*

10.1 Pre-literacy skills
Is able to discriminate between and recognise a range of basic shapes which in various orientations and combinations go to form lower and upper case letters.

10.2 Recognition of alphabet
Knows each letter of the alphabet and can name or point to any letter as requested.

10.3 Recognition of useful words
Is able to read and understand key words and symbols critical to independent functioning in the community.

10.4 Functional reading
Is able to read and understand simple texts, written notices and timetables useful for independent functioning in the community.

10.5 Reading for pleasure and interest
Is able to read and understand sufficiently well to derive pleasure and interest from books, magazines and so on.

11. *Writing*

11.1 Pre-writing skills
Is able to demonstrate control of a pen or pencil to produce prescribed patterns.

11.2 Printing own name
Is able to print own name from memory so that others can easily read it.

11.3 Printing address
Is able to print own address from memory so that others can easily read it.

11.4 Printing the alphabet
Can print from memory all the letters of the alphabet so that each can easily be recognized by others.

11.5 Signature
Is able to sign own name clearly and in a consistent manner.

11.6 Completing simple forms
Recognizes key words on simple forms and is able to complete the information required on them.

11.7 Writing from dictation
Is able to write down a dictated message capable of being read and understood by others.

11.8 Writing messages
Is able to write grammatically correct messages, able to be read and understood by others.

11.9 Creative writing
Is able to write an imaginative and/or descriptive account clearly and without help or prompts.

12. *Money*

12.1 Recognition of coins
Can discriminate between different coins and correctly identify individual coins.

12.2 Recognition of notes
Can discriminate between different notes and correctly identify individual notes.

12.3 Knowledge of monetary values
Knows the value of each type of coin and note used in national currency and its relation to purchasing power.

12.4 Knowledge of coin and note equivalence
Is able to use appropriate combinations of coins or notes to represent given values.

12.5 Money-spending and checking change
Offers appropriate coins or notes when making purchases and checks that correct change is given.

12.6 Understanding pay packet
Is able to understand the nature of and reasons for the deductions made from a pay packet and can check contents against pay slip.

12.7 Following a budget
Is able to plan and control spending according to weekly income.

12.8 Saving
Understands what savings are and is familiar with various facilities available for saving money.

13. *Time*

13.1 Telling the time
Is able to say what the time is from a clock or watch, showing either a traditional or digital display.

13.2 Association of time with events
Is able to associate times with particular events in the course of a typical day.

13.3 Estimation of time intervals
Is able to estimate passage of time and to plan activities which fit appropriately into time available.

13.4 Knowledge of calendar

Knows the relationship between days, weeks and months, and can read a calendar to find a specified date.

14. *Telephone*
    14.1 Use of domestic telephone
    Can use a domestic telephone both to receive and make calls, following standard procedures without help or prompts.
    14.2 Use of public telephone
    Is able to operate a public telephone to call a specified number without help or prompts.

15. *Colour*
    15.1 Colour discrimination and matching
    Can match primary and secondary colours and discriminate between them.
    15.2 Colour identification
    Can correctly identify and name primary and secondary colours.
    15.3 Use of colour
    Knows how colour may be used in a variety of personal, social, domestic, community and industrial situations and settings.

Interpersonal

16. *Bodily Awareness*
    16.1 Knowledge of body parts (male)
    Can name and locate different parts of the male body.
    16.2 Knowledge of body parts (female)
    Can name and locate different parts of the female body.
    16.3 Knowledge of body measurements and clothing sizes (male)
    Can state his body measurements and related clothing sizes.
    16.4 Knowledge of body measurement and clothing sizes (female)
    Can state her body measurements and related clothing sizes.
    16.5 Sexual knowledge
    Knows own sex and understands the basic differences between men and women and the function of the sexual organs.

17. *Personal Knowledge*
    17.1 Knowledge of personal details
    Is aware of important personal details relating to identity, citizenship, religion and so on, and can describe self to others.
    17.2 Role awareness
    Is aware of own roles in relation to others – family, friends, supervisors and so on, and the basic expectations associated with each role.
    17.3 Self-esteem and aspirations
    Recognises own worth as a human being, is aware of personal strengths and basic rights, and can indicate interests and hopes for the future.

18. *Social Interaction*

18.1 Greeting behaviour
Knows the appropriate way(s) in which to greet different people and does so without help or prompts.

18.2 Good manners
Is aware of accepted standards of polite behaviour towards others and behaves accordingly.

18.3 Spatial behaviour
Is aware of appropriate distance to maintain when interacting with another individual or individuals.

18.4 Visual contact
Is aware of acceptable eye contact and makes appropriate use of eye contact in social interactions.

18.5 Bodily contact
Knows how and when it is appropriate to make bodily contact with others.

18.6 Facial expression
Is able to recognize and respond to facial expressions appropriately without help or prompts.

18.7 Awareness of, and response to, feelings of others
Can recognize the feelings experienced by others and can respond to them appropriately by word or behaviour.

18.8 Friendship
Understands the importance and responsibilities attached to friendship.

19. *Social Responsibility*

19.1 Knowledge of socially acceptable behaviour
Is aware of basic rules of socially acceptable behaviour which apply in a variety of situations.

19.2 Knowledge of sexual behaviour
Knows what constitutes sexual behaviour and when it is appropriate for this to take place.

19.3 Helping others
Is aware of the importance of being generally helpful to others and offers help when appropriate.

19.4 Knowledge of law-abiding behaviour
Has a basic knowledge of law-abiding behaviour and applies this without help or prompts.

19.5 Moral judgement
Has a basic understanding of right and wrong and is able to choose the correct course of action in a typical dilemma situation.

19.6 Discrimination between situations
Is able to distinguish between situations in which others have an appropriate influence or authority over him from those situations in which they do not.

Vocational

20. *Work skills*

20.1 Work terms

Recognises and understands terms commonly used in the work situation.

20.2 Knowledge of tools

Can recognize a range of basic tools used in the workshop and knows what each is used for.

20.3 Understanding instructions

Is able to follow a range of basic instructions relating to the performance of various operations in the work setting.

20.4 Discrimination skills

Can correctly sort objects into categories and recognize differences between objects and operations on the basis of various attributes, such as colour, length, size, weight, shape, texture and function.

20.5 Quality and accuracy

Is able to perform work task(s) accurately without help or supervision.

20.6 Memory

Is able to remember instructions and sequences related to the performance of work tasks.

20.7 Co-ordination

Can perform a variety of work operations which require co-ordination of various senses and/or body parts.

20.8 Dexterity

Is able to demonstrate the attainment of manual skill in operations which involve grasping, manipulating or fine positioning of objects.

20.9 Speed

Is able to perform work task(s) at a rate comparable to that of an acceptable industrial standard.

20.10 Use of basic tools and machinery

Is able to use a range of machines and tools according to prescribed safety regulations and agreed procedures.

21. *Work Habits*

21.1 Time keeping

Is punctual in respect of times prescribed for commencing and finishing work periods and the taking of breaks.

21.2 Safety

Is aware of basic safety requirements which apply to activities, tools, materials or machines and behaves in an appropriate manner to safeguard own safety and that of others.

21.3 Clothing at work

Is aware of the protective clothing and accessories for a range of specified work activities and co-operates with these requirements.

21.4 Adherence to rules and regulations
Is aware of rules and regulations which are in force in the work situation and complies with them without help or prompts.

21.5 Care of tools
Is able to store and maintain in a safe and useful condition the basic tools assigned to him.

21.6 Consistency of performance
Is able to sustain effort and application to work task(s) in varying situations.

22. *Work Relationships*

22.1 Response to authority
Can recognize those with appropriate authority over him in the work situation and responds to this in a co-operative and positive manner.

22.2 Response to criticism
Is able to accept reasonable criticism of his work performance and take appropriate steps to improve this.

22.3 Relations with co-workers
Works well with others and co-operates as far as possible towards common goals.

23. *Work Attitudes*

23.1 Job satisfaction
Derives satisfaction from task performance and is able to say what he/she likes about it.

23.2 Adaptability
Is able to adjust to reasonable demands for changes in the work routine or work situation without significant loss of output or quality of performance.

23.3 Response to pressure
Is able to respond positively to periods of increased pressure during work without loss of quality or accuracy of performance.

24. *Work Independence*

24.1 Concentration
Is able to sustain attention to a selected or assigned task and to resist distractions for several minutes.

24.2 Work without supervision
Is able to carry out an assigned or chosen task independently, without help or supervision.

24.3 Decision making
Is able to select a course of action from a range of alternatives which have been recognized.

24.4 Exercise of foresight and initiative
Can anticipate consequences of actions and take steps to ensure appropriate outcome.

24.5 Problem-solving and originality
Can adopt appropriate strategies for solving a range of problems encountered in the work situation, and is able to show originality and imagination in approach to carrying out work assignments.

24.6 Leadership
Can take a leading role in a group, encouraging others to co-operate in accomplishing a task.

25. *Job Seeking*

25.1 Vocational exploration
Is aware of the requirements of different kinds of jobs and can express personal preference.

25.2 Job seeking procedures
Is aware of various methods of discovering job vacancies and of how to obtain help in job seeking.

25.3 Completion of job application forms
Is able to complete a variety of job application forms.

25.4 Behaviour at interview
Is aware of appropriate behaviour at job interview and is able to present self in a favourable manner.

Teaching Packages

Each of the 174 packages corresponding to the curriculum objectives conforms to a standard format and contains visual materials. The major headings in all packages are:

1. Objective
2. Pre-requisite knowledge and skills
3. Preparation
4. Task analysis and/or exercises provided
5. Application of the teaching package (suggested teaching sessions)
6. Reviewing and recording students' progress
7. Creating opportunities for knowledge and skills to be applied.

1. Objective
This repeats the objective which appears on the curriculum card, stating what the student will be able to do upon successful completion of the package.

2. Pre-requisite knowledge and skills
There is a two-column format with the left hand column listing knowledge and skills and the right hand column listing relevant teaching packages by number and name. The latter column is particularly important as it links packages with each other, reaffirming how individual packages may be seen as part of the whole system.

3. Preparation
This section provides notes of guidance to enable the user to make the

necessary preparations before applying a package. It consists of two parts:
resources – visual aids which are provided within the package together with a list of materials and/or equipment which the user must provide.
language – a list of basic words for use during the teaching sessions. (In some cases it is necessary for staff to supplement these to take account of regional variations in vocabulary.)

4. Task analysis and/or exercises provided
If the objective is one which lends itself to task analysis, then one is provided. This also forms the basis of visual aids provided and is reproduced as a listing in order to ensure consistency by the user when modelling or demonstrating the skill or behaviour concerned. If the objective does not lend itself to sequential task analysis, then a series of graded exercises are provided. Although these are sometimes intended as alternatives, they are presented in a suggested sequence.

5. Application of the teaching package
This section makes specific suggestions about how to introduce the learning objective to the students, the teaching method which may be adopted and how to make use of the resources provided within the package and by the user. A group size of six is suggested and a series of teaching sessions (or lesson plans) are outlined, usually commencing with an introductory session which serves as a basis for motivating the student(s) to want to acquire the knowledge or skill defined in the package objective.

   Within the teaching sessions, suggestions are made which involve both 'teacher activity' and 'student activity'. The results obtained on detailed individual pre-tests (following assignment to the package) enables the teacher to place emphasis on areas of common difficulty. The pre-test results are recorded in the first column of the student's individual record form.

6. Reviewing and recording student progress
Where a task analysis is available, progress is recorded by ticking items correctly performed on successive occasions. These can subsequently be plotted as a 'learning curve'. Where exercises are provided, the method of recording also enables a record to be made of the student's progress toward achieving a criterion level of performance. The record form is designed to be suitable for entering into the student's file. It provides a quick visual indicator of progress and serves as a basis for deciding when the individual should proceed to a different objective.

7. Creating opportunities for student(s) to apply knowledge and skills
In this section suggestions are made for activities or assignments which aim to ensure that opportunities are created for the student to keep knowledge and skills alive, once they have been acquired. Suggestions are made for ways in which transfer may take place to different but realistic

settings. Wherever possible, suggestions are also made for ways in which *the student may be given an opportunity to assist in the teaching of others* or to apply new knowledge or skills in a useful way.

Each package has gone through a lengthy development procedure. This is best described in a series of stages.

1. The development of a task analysis or series of exercises.
   This was the preliminary stage in the development of any package. A task analysis and/or series of exercises was generated for the objective in question. These were then approved by the Management Consultancy Group. In view of the considerable amount of work involved in drafting these task analyses or series of exercises, responsibility for this was assumed by members of the team, the Group and also by certain more distant Satellite Centres (outside the 50 mile radius of the Project) who asked to be involved in some way.

2. Packages approved by the Management Consultancy Group, and requiring locations.
   The second stage of the development of a prototype package was the addition of the visual aids. Shot lists were produced, based on the task analyses or exercises, prior to arranging a suitable location for taking the colour photographs. This stage of a package was fairly time-consuming, but was facilitated by the co-operation of many ATCs, whose staff often acted as models.

3. Development of the teaching plans for the prototype packages.
   Each package conforms to the agreed format presented above. As has been seen, a large part of a package consists of a series of teaching sessions drafted by the members of the research team in collaboration with the Management Consultancy Group. These sessions take account of a set of teaching principles drawn from research and practice. They also suggest how the visual materials provided with packages may be used.

After a package had gone through these stages, it was then sent for *evaluation* in one or more field settings, in accordance with rigorous procedures agreed with a liaison member of staff within that setting. For the purpose of this field evaluation, 30 ATCs were carefully selected (from the 100 or so within the 50 mile radius) as representing a typical cross-section of ATCs to be found anywhere in the country. An important constraint in selection was that they should be distinct from those ATCs whose managers served on the Management Consultancy Group.

During evaluation of the packages within the field trial centres, comparisons were made of different techniques of teaching, including various means of presenting the material. A liaison person, appointed within each of these centres, was responsible for collecting whatever data were required and for completing a short questionnaire following use of the package. In general, the criteria for evaluation included such factors as relevance, feasibility, validity,

reliability, acceptability, cost effectiveness and suitability for staff to use even with little training.

Following such field trials, evaluation data were analysed and finally reviewed by the researchers together with the Management Consultancy Group. If the review was favourable, the package was considered ready for widespread dissemination to the field.

Assessment and Recording Materials

An accurate assessment of individual need forms the basis of any application of teaching packages. A set of criteria for selecting the appropriate assessment tool for a specific use is presented elsewhere (Whelan and Speake, 1981). Project staff and colleagues have developed two scales to assess skill and ability in all areas covered by the curriculum. These are as follows:

The Scale for Assessing Coping Skills

This scale has been specifically designed for use by both parents and staff. It covers 36 areas of knowledge and skill which are central to independent functioning in the community. Each area is described at five levels of independence and the user indicates by ticks those things which can be done with or without help and those abilities which are being used adequately or otherwise. The resulting profile of the individual facilitates the setting of realistic goals and a better use of resources. Two summary sheets enable an individual's rating to be stored conveniently in his/her file (Whelan and Speake, 1980).

The Scale first appeared in *Learning to Cope* (Whelan and Speake, 1979). The book describes in considerable detail how assessment serves as the basis for selecting teaching objectives and also provides some 272 activities and exercises for developing self-help, social academic and interpersonal skills.

The Work Skills Rating Scale

This scale has been carefully designed to cover the important areas which research has shown to be related to success as a worker. Twenty-four areas are clearly defined and described at five levels, one of which is selected as describing the individual's current performance. The resulting profile of work skills can help staff to identify areas where training or counselling may be needed, or to match the individual's current workstyle to the demands of appropriate forms of work. Suitable for use with both handicapped and non-handicapped people, the scale form is supplied with a summary sheet for convenient filing (Whelan and Schlesinger, 1980).

Together with Lancashire Social Services, the project has also been involved in developing, piloting and finalizing a complete recording system for individual trainees. This is known as the *Personal Record System*. The system comprises a comprehensive set of standardised forms for use by the Adult

Training Centre (or Social Education Centre). The 14 forms, covering background information and assessment results, are the product of extensive inter-disciplinary consultation. Their use should lead to improved communications and more effective teamwork (Whelan and Lancashire Social Services, 1980).

POTENTIAL USERS OF THE COPEWELL SYSTEM

While developed initially for use in Adult Training Centres, the curriculum teaching packages and record forms should also be of use to a much wider field. Special school staff, for example, should be able to adapt any package to suit the needs of their youngsters, particularly those in their final year. Hostel and other residential staff should find the self-help and interpersonal packages of specific use. Of particular relevance to individuals working on further education or MSC courses geared to work preparation would be those packages in the vocational skills area.

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11

Educational Television for Mentally Handicapped People: The Impact of Let's Go

Fred Heddell and Rosemary Lee

INTRODUCTION

There are still very few examples of television broadcasts designed specifically for mentally handicapped people. The BBC's three *Let's go* series were pioneering ventures in this field. It is hoped that the following description of this enterprise and assessment of its impact may both supply evidence about the contribution of televised material to the education of this group, and also encourage lecturers and others to exploit such teaching resources more fully.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LET'S GO

Let's go is the collective name for three BBC television series for moderately mentally handicapped young people and adults (ie in post-Warnock terminology, those with severe learning difficulties). The aims of the series, as set out in pre-transmission information, were:

1. to develop self-confidence through the mastery of social skills
2. to encourage decision-making and greater independence of action
3. to enlarge the horizons of mentally handicapped people
4. to encourage adults working with mentally handicapped people to stress opportunities rather than hazards.

In the 12-minute programmes, presented by Brian Rix, mentally handicapped people were shown managing everyday situations successfully, and basic teaching points were reinforced. The first series was broadcast between September 1978 and March 1979; the second series from January to March 1981; the third from January to March 1983. While the aims remained constant, several changes were made from one series to the next. This first

section of the paper outlines the background to the enterprise and gives a brief account of its development. A fuller account of the planning and production of the first series is given in Croton (1980).

Background

Since at least the early 1970s, BBC Schools Television had been receiving requests for a regular series for mentally handicapped children. The requests stemmed both from organisations and from individual teachers and were mediated and endorsed by BBC Education Officers. The numbers of children in ESN(M) and (S) schools were, however, felt to be too small to justify a special series, and it was only when the educational needs of mentally handicapped adults began to be brought to the attention of BBC Continuing Education that the idea of a series jointly produced by the two departments, intended for both adolescents and adults, arose. For internal reasons, Series 2 and 3 were produced by the Continuing Education Department alone.

After a brief feasibility exercise, such a series was proposed to and accepted by the BBC's two education councils in 1976 and a production team and consultants were appointed. An extensive process of research began, and many conflicting suggestions for programme format and content were received. The consultants helped with the formulation of the series' aims, made suggestions about programme content and vetted scripts. After considerable deliberations, they advised that the target audience should be those with moderate to severe learning difficulties. (One reason for this decision was the lack of broadcasting provision for the former group. Young people with moderate learning difficulties were known to make use of existing educational programmes.) The series was therefore aimed at an audience in the IQ range 35-70 (although this was used as a rough guide only). It was anticipated that viewers would be in the upper age-range in ESN(M) and (S) schools, or in adult training centres. Some would be living at home; others were likely to be living in hospitals and hostels.

Pre-testing

As far as could be ascertained, no other broadcasting network had attempted such a series for national transmission. There were a few examples of teaching films and video programmes, but they were of limited relevance. For pre-testing purposes four trial programmes were produced, employing various techniques and styles of presentation. These were not intended for transmission, but were shown on cassette to about 250 parents and professionals and to about 200 mentally handicapped people in special schools, adult training centres, hospitals, adult institutes and further education colleges. (For a fuller description of the pre-testing exercise, see Lee et al, 1978.) A worksheet whereby the behaviour of the mentally handicapped audience could be recorded helped the BBC education officers involved to become aware of patches of inattention and misunderstanding, and served to balance the uncritical enthusiasm which most of the client groups expressed.

While the majority of the mentally handicapped audience said that they enjoyed the pilot programmes the same could not be said of the parents and professionals. Although there was a general welcome for the idea of a series, there were recurring criticisms particularly of the programmes' tone which was felt to be patronising. On the other hand, the majority of those who saw the trial programmes approved the use of mentally handicapped people, rather than actors, in the programmes.

After the pre-testing exercise, final decisions were made about the format of the series. Brian Rix, who had emerged as the most popular presenter in the trial programmes, was engaged, and each programme began with his introduction of the subject, and a visual illustration of it. This was followed by a film sequence of mentally handicapped people successfully practising the relevant skills. Key points were reinforced in various ways, involving the use of animation, demonstrations, repetition and stills from the film sequences.

Series 1: the programmes

From the numerous suggestions for programme topics received from a great variety of sources including the pretesting sessions, 20 were finally selected. They were divided into four groups of five:

Social skills

1) Let's go on a bus

2) Let's go shopping

3) Let's go and buy clothes

4) Let's go to the post office

5) Let's go and telephone

Body care

6) Let's go and get ready

7) Let's go and look after our teeth

8) Let's go and keep fit

9) Let's go swimming

10) Let's go cycling

Learning together

11) Let's go to the centre

12) Let's go to the centre again

13) Let's go and plan a meal

14) Let's go and cook a meal

15) Let's go and lend a hand

Wider horizons

16) Let's go and find a hobby

17) Let's go with some more hobbies

18) Let's go and eat out

19) Let's go to a football match

20) Let's go and join a club

It was agreed that the programmes should be transmitted three times a week: twice during school hours, and additionally on Sunday mornings so that parents could watch with their children.

Series 1: the package

Early research indicated that many of the teachers or instructors and most parents or nurses were not accustomed to using television as a teaching aid. The problem this caused could to some extent be overcome by the publication of detailed notes about the programmes which included ideas for preparation and follow-up work. This book was designed to be photocopied for maximum distribution. Through the generosity of MENCAP, the Scottish Society for the Mentally Handicapped and the Scottish Health Education Unit, one free copy of the notes was distributed to all establishments for the mentally handicapped and funds were provided for workpacks for the mentally handicapped produced by a small group of Scottish teachers which were also widely distributed. Slide packs for nine of the 20 programmes were produced by MENCAP.

The transmissions of *Let's go* were preceded by a television documentary, called *Accident of birth*, which was shown at peak viewing time. The series itself was heralded by a programme for parents and professionals, *Introducing let's go...*, which included examples of follow-up work by teachers and parents. A

related radio series for professionals, *Let's go into practice*, presented by Professor Peter Mittler, was also broadcast during the Autumn of 1978.

Besides this broadcasting activity, the BBC held a series of regional workshop sessions in collaboration with DTMHA (Diploma in the training and further education of mentally handicapped adults) course tutors on the educational use of television material, with particular reference to *Let's go*.

Series 1: evaluation

Since *Let's go* was such a new venture, an evaluation study together with suggested guidelines for any future series, was commissioned from the Department of Educational Studies at the University of Hull (Spencer, undated). A substantial amount of feedback on the series was also obtained from unsolicited letters to Brian Rix and to the production team, and from the visits to schools and ATCs made by BBC Education Officers. On the whole, reactions were favourable and the case for a second series was easily made. Some changes in emphasis were indicated, however, and the new production and consultancy team for Series 2 had several fundamental decisions to make before starting work.

Series 2: planning

One question to be reconsidered concerned the nature and width of the target audience. The preliminary findings of the Hull study suggested that ESN(S) schools and ATCs, while generally approving the series, found that the programmes contained too much material, and the presentation was too fast: 'Let's go a little more slowly', as one respondent put it. On the other hand, teachers in ESN(M) schools found the pace and language appropriate but considered the content too simple, and were in many cases unenthusiastic about the programmes altogether. With some regret, the decision was finally taken to drop the ESN(M) group from the target audience and to concentrate on learners in ESN(S) schools, ATCs and hospitals.

It was agreed that the pace of the second series would be a little slower. The format of the programmes was to remain basically the same, though there would be even more reinforcement of the important aspects using the established methods. In response to many requests, it was also decided that the second series should have an increased emphasis on social and interpersonal skills. The first programme for example was to deal with the use of appropriate greetings, and similar aspects of social interaction would be repeated throughout the series.

Series 2: programmes and support materials

The 10 new programmes were:

1) Let's go and meet people

2) Let's wear the right clothes

3) Let's go to the hostel

4) Let's do the room up

5) Let's be careful

6) Let's go and cross the road

7) Let's ask for help

8) Let's go to the doctor

9) Let's go and do some gardening

10) Let's go outdoors

The slide packs offered with only nine of the first 20 programmes had proved to be popular and were successful even though they were often felt to be expensive. For the second series slides were made for all the programmes as a properly planned part of the package. The notes for the second series were more comprehensive and included more printed matter for the students themselves. Other additional features included a vocabulary of the less common words used in the programme and a more detailed skills analysis. For this series the notes were sold, not distributed free.

Series 3: planning and pre-testing

The existence of a third *Let's go* series was largely due to external pressure, both from such bodies as MENCAP and from schools and ATCs. There was considerable diversity of opinion, however, about what areas the new programmes should cover, and the nature of some of the proposals already suggested that the established style of *Let's go* was becoming inappropriate. There was enough life in it for one more series nevertheless.

A further pilot programme was made and shown to audiences of both handicapped students and professionals. As a result it was decided to include several programmes dealing with problem situations where it was not possible to present clear rules. In tackling the problems of being bullied, for example, several suggestions were made about how to handle the situation but the question was left open ended for discussion between students, parents and teachers.

Again slide packs were offered for all the programmes and the notes were extended to include a specific section for use at home with the suggestion that establishments photocopied them for distribution and use in a home liaison project.

Series 3: programmes

1) Let's make up our minds

2) Let's look after our clothes

3) Let's go away

4) Let's make a snack

5) Let's go out together

6) Let's join a crowd

7) Let's be serious for a moment

8) Let's be nice to animals

9) Let's be safe at home

10) Let's find out about things

USE OF THE SERIES

Amount of use

There are no figures available for the total number of institutions which made use of one or all of the *Let's go* series. The Hull research provided some data on the level and type of use of the first series in different categories of establishments but the researchers were disappointed by the low level of response to their questionnaires. While the data obtained came predominantly from a group who both liked and used the programmes, it should not be assumed that non-respondents were non-users. The questionnaires were quite complicated and time-consuming to complete, and evidence from other sources suggests that many regular users did not take part in the survey. However, from the figures available it seems reasonable to estimate that about half of all ATCs and ESN(S) schools used the first series in some way. As has been explained, the second and third series were both aimed at learners in these institutions, and much of the evidence on quality of use has been gathered from them.

While ESN(M) schools certainly watched programmes in the first series, teachers from these schools formed the least satisfied group of respondents to the Hull questionnaire. Besides criticising the content, many commented adversely on the use of the term 'mentally handicapped' and the presence on the screen of people who were recognisably mentally handicapped (eg young

people with Downs Syndrome), and asserted that their students had been upset by being identified with this group. It had been assumed by the *Let's go* team that the programmes would only be used with the less able pupils in (M) schools, but it appeared that in many cases it was not feasible (or not felt worthwhile) for such pupils to be extracted from a larger group. However, some ESN(M) schools did continue to make valuable use of programmes from all three series.

Despite several attempts through articles and workshops to involve nursing staff, the series was never widely used in mental handicap hospitals. (The hospital response to the Hull questionnaire was so poor that the group was dropped from the study at an early stage.) The feedback suggested that, among the reasons for the lack of use, logistical problems connected with hospital organisation loomed large. It was also pointed out that the movement towards independent living in the community meant that a high proportion of those remaining in hospitals were too handicapped to benefit from the programmes. It seemed unfortunate, however, that more use was not made of them with those about to leave hospital who were often being given intensive social training in areas covered by the programmes. It may be significant that in more than one case of good practice with *Let's go* in a hospital setting, it was the adult education sector which had taken the initiative rather than the nursing staff.

While special schools, ATCs and mental handicap hospitals were the main targets for *Let's go* publicity, other institutions received information about the series as part of BBC Education's general output. Feedback was received from several further education colleges and adult institutes about the series, and these were visited where possible.

From the outset the programmes were designed to be transmitted on Sunday mornings as well as during the week so that they could be used at home by parents with their own children as well as in schools and adult training centres. It is difficult to assess the real level of home viewing but judging by the correspondence to both the BBC and to Brian Rix directly, this has in fact been one of the major areas where the series has been used. BBC Education Officers received mock-serious complaints from parents about the disruption to their Sunday mornings by the tyranny of *Let's go* which their offspring would not let them miss.

Mode of use

Since *Let's go* was an educational series, it could legally be used in recorded form, provided various conditions were met. How well the programmes were used was almost always connected with whether or not they were watched live or as recordings. The recordings not only liberated the teachers from the particular times when the programmes were broadcast; they also allowed for much greater flexibility of use – frequent repetition of some sections and omission of others, for instance.

An important part of the BBC Education Officers' work involved making institutions aware of the educational advantages of using the programmes in recorded forms, and encouraging them to acquire video-recording equipment. Although the principal usage of the first series was of the live transmissions, it is likely that by the third series recorded use had become the more popular mode. The importance of this shift is considerable. The transmission times of the broadcasts had been chosen in order to allow teachers to watch the programmes on Sundays and prepare work around them, and then to use both the weekday broadcasts with their classes so that some reinforcement was possible. However, this was obviously less satisfactory than having free choice about when and how to use the material.

It is likely that, from the beginning of the first series, a higher proportion of schools than of ATCs used the programmes in recorded form since some schools were already experienced in the use of educational television.

Quality of use

The comments in this section are necessarily subjective and anecdotal, drawn from observation visits, letters and reports from users themselves. However, they may serve to give some flavour of the variety of ways in which the programmes were used. Examples are drawn from the whole range of institutions using the series in this section; some differentiation will be made in the next.

Throughout the series there were examples of pedestrian, not to say poor, usage. In one ATC, for instance, all 100 or so trainees were shown the programme en masse once a week, with no preparation or follow-up work at all. There were several accounts of teachers following the programmes with irrelevant questions of factual recall ('what was he called?') rather than with questions or activities about the specific topic. In an FE college, students were encouraged to copy the notes out into their own books, rather than to do the recommended exercises. It had been hoped that the brevity of the programmes would allow plenty of time for follow-up work, but this did not always happen. Some teachers and instructors complained that the programmes needed so much reinforcement and offered so many opportunities for follow-up activity, that the scheduling of a new one every week became impossible to cope with. In such circumstances, they fell back on what they knew was a superficial coverage. Recording the programmes would, of course, have avoided this hazard.

The quality was generally better when one or more of the support materials were used (perhaps simply indicating that more thought had been taken). Much use was made of the exercises in the notes. Those institutions which purchased the slides found them extremely valuable – usually as reinforcement after a transmission, but sometimes as a kind of trailer beforehand.

One step on from reliance on the support materials was the use of adapted or teacher-made materials, serving to bring the programmes nearer to the local

context. It was, for instance, surprising to the production team how often the first programme of all – *Let's go on a bus* – was criticised because the bus was not the same colour or shape as teachers' local buses. The enterprising, however, soon made slide sets of a local journey by bus, repeating the stages in the *Let's go* programme. Sometimes the photographs were taken by pupils/trainees themselves. A wide range of slides, flash-cards and posters were made by individual teachers and instructors to reinforce the programmes and increase their relevance.

There were also examples of the programmes being followed up in different ways with different levels of ability. In *Introducing Let's go*, a sequence filmed in a college of further education showed *Let's go and telephone* being followed up with a group of fairly able students (making a list of useful numbers for themselves) and with one much less able boy (dialling a number and recognising the ringing tone). At a *Let's go* study day organised by another college, a teacher from a school containing pupils with moderate and with severe learning difficulties described how, after watching *Let's go on a bus*, the former went on a bus journey while the latter had visited the local bus garage, where they were allowed to practice the relevant skills on one of the buses. Such examples were encouraging evidence that in some contexts the programmes were found useful with the more able group.

These examples show that a good deal of follow-up work took the form of practical activity and skill practice. This was something which the pre-series workshops and the notes had been at pains to emphasise in order to mitigate the relative passivity of programme viewing. Considerable energy and imagination went into some of these activities. At one adult education centre attended on day-release by a small group of trainees from an ATC, the intrepid tutor arranged for the group to go along with her on her next visit to the dentist, after the screening of *Let's go and look after our teeth*. And when one of the group, after seeing *Let's lend a hand*, said how much she would like to help at a local nursery, the tutor managed to arrange a placement.

Centres and schools with facilities to record programmes were able to follow up the broadcasts much more fully. One centre, for instance, planned six weeks' activity around *Let's go shopping*, building up to a shopping trip (for which the trainees had saved money) in the West End of London. The other *Let's go* programmes were shown if relevant (eg *Let's go to the post office* for savings) – otherwise, they were recorded for later use.

To give an idea of the kind of energy with which some institutions approached *Let's go*, an extract is included here from a piece written by an instructor about the use made of the first series by his centre:

It was decided that a suitable group of young clients would follow the programmes and it would take the form of a 'group project'. For the whole of the series the group met one day a week and their days were planned as follows:

1. Watched the television programme – here it was interesting to see how quickly each member of the group identified themselves not only with the programme itself, but also with its presenter

Brian Rix. For if you were near the Further Education Room around 10.15 each Tuesday morning you could always hear 12 voices in unison call back to the television set 'Hello Brian'.

2. Discussion and classroom work related to certain aspects of the programme – for instance, the classroom work for the programme called *Let's go shopping* consisted of writing shopping lists of the goods listed in the *Let's go* notes, identifying and counting money, reading price labels, finding out where to buy articles in a large department store, learning social signs connected with shopping, ie *closed, pay here, push, exit*, etc, and various other activities according to the individual client's needs.

3. Carry out the practical aspects of the television programme in a real and meaningful way – this meant that for each programme the clients were involved in going out and gaining practical experience. For example:
Let's go and keep fit – a training session with the local football team
Let's go and eat out – lunch at a local Wimpy Bar
Let's go and lend a hand – cleaning a local church.

Reinforcement to the television programmes included the use of appropriate sets of slides to emphasise certain skills and the clients producing workbooks on various aspects of their *Let's go* activities. Visual material for individual programmes was displayed in what became known as the *Let's go* room.

During the *Let's go* series several parents/instructors meetings were held and discussion resulted in follow-up work being done at home or in the hostel. Partly as a result of these meetings, the Centre was asked by the local Society for Mentally Handicapped Children to enter a float in the local carnival based on the *Let's go* programmes. The *Let's go* group were not only involved in the construction of the float but also manned it on the day of the carnival. Leaflets telling people about *Let's go* were handed out to the thousands of people that lined the streets that evening. The float aroused a great deal of interest and was awarded a 'highly commended' certificate by the judges.

It is worth noting here how the programmes, besides stimulating educational activity, were also used to foster liaison with parents, and as the theme for the carnival float. The latter had very little to do with the programmes themselves, but the title was presumably felt to lend it some kind of media-associated 'glamour'.

Sometimes the series had an effect on the organisation of institutions. *Let's go and eat out*, a programme in which a young couple go to a Wimpy Bar and order food, caused both a school and an adult training centre to change their canteen arrangements. The centre advertised for waiters/waitresses from among the trainees, and interviewed all who applied, video-taping the interviews. Such elaborate follow-up work was unusual, but the willingness to experiment with new activity was not.

The pattern of transmissions made the programme particularly suitable for home liaison projects in which parents could be encouraged to take part in the teaching programme. In a typical pattern of liaison parents would watch the programme with their child on a Sunday morning; the student would then probably watch a second time in school or centre; and then additional follow-up work would be devised to be carried out at home. This type of work was particularly apparent at the beginning of the first series and in fact for some centres and even a few schools the associated parent meetings were the first they had ever held, and undoubtedly of great value to both parties. Unfortunately the research projects did not cover this aspect so it is difficult to

assess the real impact. Comment from parents, particularly through organisations like MENCAP, would indicate that they found the involvement very useful and gained insight into the work of the establishment. There is also evidence that as some parents became aware of modern trends in the teaching of social skills they began to question the curriculum in schools and centres.

IMPACT

Differences between schools and adult training centres

Let's go appears to have had a different kind of impact on schools and other educational institutions from that on adult training centres – a difference largely explicable in terms of differences between the two types of establishment. Teachers were much more familiar than instructors with the use of teaching materials. They had fewer scruples about adapting materials for their own ends and used them to implement existing curricula rather than letting the materials dictate what happened next.

Even at the start of the first series some schools were experienced in the use of educational television. The use of schools programmes like *Merry Go Round* which was designed for children of eight and nine years old was common with 10 and 11 year olds in (M) schools and even up to 14 year olds in (S) schools. (Pupils over about 14 tend to be put off by the juvenile style of such programmes, however suitable the ability level.) As the curriculum of most (S) schools and many (M) schools was already biased towards the teaching of basic social competency *Let's go* was more often used to provide a valuable extra resource and back-up than to change the existing curriculum.

There is however considerable evidence from sources like the Education Officers' reports that, although many schools claimed that their curriculum contained aspects of social training including those covered in *Let's go*, the teaching was often haphazard and poorly organised. For some of these schools *Let's go* provided the basis for a useful framework. This seems to have been particularly valuable when used as part of a home liaison project.

A high proportion of adult training centres, on the other hand, were still dominated by light industrial work and offered very little further education of any type (see Whelan and Speake, 1977). Although this deficiency was of great concern to staff, only a small proportion of them had any formal training and many would admit to great uncertainty about appropriate methods or subject matter. Some were using modified versions of teaching methods and equipment used in schools but were dissatisfied with the maturity level, and trainees were often bored by the continuation of an approach they had already used for a number of years.

How far *Let's go* influenced the development of further education in centres or how far it simply reflected a trend which was already under way is impossible to establish. It is certain however that a significant number of

centres started new teaching programmes based on the subject matter from the series. Many establishments altered their teaching to coincide with the programmes and used the suggestions in the notes extensively. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that, in these cases, *Let's go* provided a curriculum framework where none had existed before. Here, the material *did* dictate what happened next, and it can be argued that this was preferable to the random activity carried out formerly.

The change that has occurred in many ATCs since 1978 when the programmes were first transmitted is very striking. Again, it is impossible to tell how far *Let's go* has contributed, but there are now more examples of worked-out teaching programmes within centres, and there is more familiarity with the idea of materials as resources rather than as prime movers. It proved quite difficult, for instance, to plan observation visits related to programmes from the second and third series because so many centres now record and use them as appropriate, rather than planning their teaching around the broadcasts. The centres, in fact, are becoming more like the schools and are taking more responsibility for their own curriculum development. One example is the centre quoted on in the previous section which no longer builds its teaching programme around *Let's go* but has organised a series of 'short courses' for which trainees can opt, some of which include *Let's go* programmes or other recorded material. This seems a significant advance.

The effect of the programmes: on learners

It is important to tackle here the question of the precise contribution the programmes made to the learning of those who viewed them. The researchers working on the Hull evaluation study carried out an experimental programme in which some groups watched *Let's go* without instruction, some had instruction without broadcasts and others had instruction combined with viewing *Let's go*. (All the groups were very small.) Significant learning took place in all three conditions and there was no advantage demonstrated for the group in which *Let's go* was used as an adjunct to teaching. This was a disappointing and somewhat puzzling result which does not concur with the impressions of most *Let's go* users.

Most of the users agree that *Let's go* had considerable power to motivate. The programmes were experienced as enjoyable, and even when they covered familiar ground they did so in a new way and with the credibility of television. Brian Rix's popularity was important here – 'he'll clean his teeth now he has seen Brian do it, though he never would before', as one mother said. The programmes aroused the interest of their audience in a way that could be channelled by good teachers and instructors into skills practice of various kinds. As the series developed, members of the production team tended informally to re-state its first aim (originally 'to develop self-confidence through the mastery of social skills') as 'to encourage the practice of social and coping skills'. This seems a more realistic assessment of what television programmes can achieve, and of what *Let's go* did best.

Besid s motivating its target audience, there is evidence that *Let's go* helped to increase self-confidence and raise morale. 'We have our own programme now', said one trainee to a visiting official from the local Social Services Department, and this feeling of identification with the broadcasts, aided by Brian Rix's friendly manner, seems to have been widespread. More importantly, perhaps, there were examples of people using the skills they had learned as a result of the programmes for their own purposes. Soon after *Let's go and telephone*, a pupil in a Scottish school, sulking after a ticking-off, went to the staff telephone and rang his mother to complain about the way he had been treated. The week after seeing *Let's go on a bus*, a hospital inmate who had missed the minibus to the evening institute, said to two friends 'let's catch a bus'. 'We were quite surprised' wrote the tutor 'how they had used their initiative in travelling eight miles between the hospital and the institute with changes in buses and a walk between the two routes'. Such examples of the ownership of skills and the self-confidence to employ them are most encouraging.

As the quotation above implies, there was also some re-evaluation of the learners' capabilities on the part of parents and professionals, although the evidence here is far from clear-cut. One of the main reasons for using mentally handicapped people in the programmes instead of actors was to demonstrate how competently they could cope in everyday situations. Some of the examples cited above show that many institutions were prepared to encourage their pupils or trainees to be involved in similar activities, but certainly there was still hesitancy on the part of some institutions and some parents. The response to *Let's join a crowd* in the third series which shows a group of young people in a pub was interesting. Many students who attend ATCs have never been in a pub and most parents and staff would not encourage them to do so. The programme aroused considerable interest on the part of many of these students though it seems to have been rejected by a sizeable minority of parents and staff. In this case it is clear that the horizons of the students were widened without a corresponding change in the attitudes of the carers. The programme *Let's go cycling* was dropped from the repeat transmissions of the first series because there had been so many complaints that it was encouraging a dangerous activity. Campaign for the Mentally Handicapped, a pressure group, complained about the decision. In 1982 when there was a new selection of repeats, the programme was included, and there was no outcry. The episode illustrates the general lack of agreement about how much independence is to be recommended, but also perhaps a growing acceptance of risk.

The effect of the programmes: on teachers and instructors.

If the three series helped to raise student morale, they certainly seem to have done the same for staff, particularly staff in adult training centres. There was a feeling that the importance of their work had been recognised, and their need for teaching resources taken seriously. The fact that many of the programmes were based in ATCs was appreciated. There were other factors in the early

1980s contributing to a new sense of confidence in centres – among them the work of the Hester Adrian Research Centre at the University of Manchester – so the influence of *Let's go* must not be exaggerated. But it was encouraging that, at one of the chief manifestations of that new confidence, the exhibition of ATC work at the National Exhibition Centre in 1980, more than half of the 40 centres which mounted displays featured *Let's go* as a central aspect of their further education programmes. Many had taken the basic theme from one particular programme and modified or extended it to meet their own particular needs.

Besides acting as a morale-raiser, the programmes obviously served a staff development function. It is important to remember that many ATC staff are not trained to teach and have no tradition of in-service staff development. They were wary of head-on attempts in this direction – few of them followed the radio series *Let's go into practice* for instance. At the regional staff workshops, it was very difficult to get any form of group work on programme preparation or follow-up under way. People would criticise the programmes but would not work on them – probably because they were afraid of exposing their inexperience. Evidence from other BBC educational initiatives – notably *On the move*, the literacy series – has suggested that programmes aimed at *students* actually promote staff development better than direct training programmes (which never attract large audiences), and this seems also to have been true for *Let's go*. Most found the simplicity of the approach, even though it was often criticised, comforting rather than threatening. And staff who had previously been unsure about what they should be doing now had something, at least in outline, against which they could judge themselves.

One particular area in which expertise undoubtedly increased was in the appreciation of the usefulness of video-recording. It is clear that there has been an enormous increase in the number of ATCs possessing video recorders since the situation reported in the 1977 survey (Whelan and Speake, 1977) when only three per cent of centres had them, though precise up-to-date figures are not available. The number in schools has also increased. Not only has this improved the way in which *Let's go* has been used, as discussed above, but it has also meant that staff have made more use of other educational programmes, extracting particularly appropriate sequences or repeating material until it is understood. Many schools and centres have found the value of adding a camera to their equipment and have invested in additional portable equipment. The use appears to be very varied and includes the recording of students' performance, making their own *Let's go* type programmes and records of holidays and visits. In some cases the recordings have been very valuably used in parent training programmes which developed directly from the original parent liaison projects.

THE BROADCASTERS' POINT OF VIEW

In order to have a complete picture of the *Let's go* enterprise, it is necessary to appreciate the broadcasters' position. There was some hesitation within the BBC about the wisdom of transmitting programmes for a mentally handicapped audience. The producer himself has admitted that he was sceptical (Croton, 1980, p9). Throughout all the series, a very delicate balance had to be maintained between slowing the programmes down sufficiently for them to succeed with their prime audience, and keeping them acceptably like 'real television' for the eavesdropping general public. Some would argue that the pace was never slow enough, and that the programmes were always too crowded and too complex for those with severe learning difficulties. But others would point to the valuable service the programmes did in educating the casual viewer about the capabilities of the mentally handicapped. (It would certainly have been a waste of the *broadcasting* nature of the medium not to have attempted this.) At all events, a certain tension connected with the need to satisfy two very different audiences is sometimes apparent.

Another tension for the broadcasters is concerned with the use of the scarce air-time granted to BBC Continuing Education programmes and to similar output in the independent network. Each time a series is targeted at a specific audience whether professional (managers, nurses) or disadvantaged (the deaf, the mentally handicapped) there is a demand that the provision be continued and a 'regular slot' established. But such regular slots must limit the space available for new groups. At present, it is a constant problem, although new developments in cable and satellite transmission may alter the situation in the future.

In the case of *Let's go*, the investment by schools and centres in recording equipment was forcibly put forward as an argument for continuing into a second and then third series. Now the argument has shifted somewhat. Today the presentation of *Let's go* seems dated and even its content not entirely appropriate. The most significant example lies in the presentation of simple basic skills which are acquired as rules. It is a mark of the success of those working in the field of mental handicap that this approach is becoming less and less appropriate. Today there are many more opportunities for people with handicaps to take a much greater part in the community in which they live, but it is not only necessary to acquire simple social skills. It is now even more important to learn how to cope with the unplanned and the unexpected. So the pressure is no longer for a further *Let's go* series, but for continuing provision of some kind for the same target audience.

At the same time, the broadcasters are under pressure to make provision for other groups of people with learning difficulties for whom *Let's go* was felt inappropriate. Those with moderate learning difficulties (who would include the ESN(M) pupils originally seen as part of the *Let's go* audience) are singled out by some as likely to find instructional television particularly valuable

(Spencer, undated, pp62-3). There is also a lobby for programmes for the more profoundly handicapped.

In all these cases, the broadcasters have to weigh considerations of need against questions about the right use of public broadcasting. The dual function of *Let's go* – raising the consciousness of a general audience, while motivating a specific one – has already been discussed. That was a delicate enough balance. For a more handicapped target audience, close-circuit transmissions might be a better answer.

It is interesting that the demands on the *Let's go* audience mentioned above – the need to learn how to cope with the unplanned and unexpected -- are constantly raised in relation to other groups: the young, the unemployed, and members of ethnic minorities, for instance. It remains to be seen whether all these need separate provision, tailored for their particular circumstances, or whether programmes of general relevance could be made with mediators adapting them as appropriate for different audiences.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it seems that, in several ways, *Let's go* acted as a catalyst. By attempting to reflect current good practice in the education of those with severe learning difficulties, it provided a kind of national yardstick by which individual educational or training establishments could assess their provision. For adult training centres at least it was a unifying event of a kind which had never happened before to these very isolated institutions. It was an interesting example of the effect that learning materials can have on curriculum development. It raised questions in the minds of parents, learners and staff about the further education on offer. Perhaps most important of all its impact was such that those who decided not to use it had to justify their decision by demonstrably better practice. If it has now been superseded, even that can be seen as a kind of achievement.

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12

Learning for Independence: An Overview

Seamus Hegarty and Alan Dean

Prior to 1971 a sizeable minority of the population were deemed to be ineducable, spending their school-age years in junior training centres before progressing to adult training centres or subnormality hospitals. The Education Act 1970 ensured that all children became the responsibility of education authorities, and appropriate education had to be provided for all. This led to a mushrooming of special school provision in the early seventies. This was not matched however by a corresponding growth in provision after school – when, on account of delayed patterns of development, formal education could still have an important role.

This book has assembled information on such educational provision as has developed in FE colleges and adult education institutes in recent years. The purpose of this final chapter is to overview the information and discuss key issues arising from it. It is hoped that this will serve to inform the debate on the provision of education for people with severe learning difficulties and assist both policy makers and practitioners in the further development of such provision.

NATURE AND EXTENT OF PROVISION

Less than one in ten FE colleges made any provision for students with severe learning difficulties at the time of the survey – summer 1983. This represents some 47 colleges spread across 26 education authorities. (Some colleges reported *plans* to make provision and there is other evidence to suggest that there may be a slight increase in the number of colleges actually making provision.) With the exception of a very few authorities which had a comprehensive system of provision for all 16–19 year olds in this category, most authorities offering any provision did so in one or two colleges only. Course organisation in colleges varied widely but four main patterns can be discerned: link courses; full-time courses; continuing education; and outreach provision.

1. Link courses

This was a major form of provision, occurring in some three quarters of

colleges. Link courses are based on an arrangement whereby pupils from a special school – or in a few cases clients from an adult training centre – attend college on a part-time basis. This was typically for 2-6 hours a week, throughout the year. The general aim of these courses was to prepare and select students for entry into a full-time course, with a consequent emphasis on promoting social independence. Not all students went on to full-time courses however, either because they were judged unsuitable or because there was no full-time course available.

2. Full-time courses

Some 20 colleges ran full-time courses specifically for students with severe learning difficulties. Most lasted for two years. Students were generally in the 16-19 age range, although older students were commonly admitted. The main emphasis was placed on social and life skills with a view to promoting students' independence. Vocational preparation was given low priority in view of the limited employment prospects of students. It was common for courses to incorporate a residential element.

3. Continuing education

Some colleges ran part-time courses focussed on the leisure/ recreation area for clients from adult training centres and hospitals. These could be single-subject classes in eg painting, pottery or cookery, or they could be multi-subject courses, covering a range of self-help and social skills.

4. Outreach

A number of colleges provided courses in clients' own institutions, usually adult training centres but also hospitals and residential homes. Colleges working in this way usually offered more than one course to more than one institution. Apart from the location outside the college, these courses were similar in content to the continuing education courses. Most were single subject and in the leisure area, though basic literacy was sometimes offered.

Adult education provision for mentally handicapped people is still relatively sparse. Only 27 adult education institutes were found to make provision. These were virtually confined to London and the South East – 15 in the London area and a further nine in neighbouring counties. The scale of provision varied enormously, with student numbers ranging from four to more than 300.

Provision fell into three broad types: basic education courses (numeracy, literacy, living skills); creative courses (dance, drama, art and craft); and mainstream courses (wide range, with pottery and literacy predominant). The first two types were special courses, run specifically for mentally handicapped students, while the third catered for other students as well. Classes were generally though not always held on the same premises as mainstream classes. Ten institutes held classes on an outreach basis in day centres, adult training centres, hostels or hospitals.

CURRICULUM CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Given the diversity of courses, a corresponding variety of curricular provision was to be expected. Some common patterns emerged from the survey findings however and are exemplified also in the descriptions of particular provision. A major goal was to assist students toward independent adult lives, taking into account their limitations and the restrictions imposed by society on them. This tended to shape both the content and organisation of courses.

Course content can be grouped into three broad categories: skills for daily living; leisure/recreation; and basic education. The first of these areas is perhaps the one most obviously associated with promoting independence. Courses covered a wide range of personal and daily living skills – cookery, homecraft and simple home maintenance, hygiene and personal appearance, road safety and use of public transport, shopping, use of community resources and functional communication. These were a particular feature of full-time courses in colleges, sometimes constituting the major component of such courses. When link courses contained such elements the orientation was toward college life and preparing students to function independently in the college context. Adult education provision in this area tended to cover 'living skills', in an integrated way, encompassing social interaction skills, transport training and community use.

Most courses for the group contained some provision in the leisure/recreation area. As might be expected, this was a particular emphasis of provision in the adult education sector. Courses on offer here covered dance, drama, music, numerous art and craft options and various other recreational activities. In the college sector single-subject leisure activities were a common feature of both continuing education and outreach provision. Leisure activities were also incorporated into many full-time courses. (It should be noted here that the Youth Service and voluntary organisations also provide leisure opportunities for this group. Gateway Clubs in particular are a well-established source of leisure provision.)

The essential difference in function between leisure activities and instruction in daily living skills should be noted. The former do offer educational benefits – improved motor co-ordination, better self-expression and so on. Some teachers of leisure classes claim that students become more independent and socially aware as a result of attending these classes. While such claims may be soundly based in individual cases, they should not distract attention from the real function of leisure activities, which is to give students enjoyable experiences and enable them make constructive use of free time. Just because people do not learn very well does not mean that every organised activity they are engaged in has to have an educational dimension. Like other people they should have opportunities simply to enjoy themselves. Over-enthusiastic staff who seek to 'slip in' a bit of education at every opportunity may not always be acting for the best. In addition, leisure activities are not conducive to the sort

of skill development that social independence requires, and caution must be exercised in advancing too-large claims for leisure activities.

Basic education courses were in almost all cases confined to literacy and numeracy. Whether in the FE or adult education sectors, the emphasis was on functional competence, ie enabling students to use language and number skills in everyday life. Instruction could be on a single-subject, classroom-based mode or could be integrated with other activities. Thus a shopping trip could encompass reading (checking labels and prices), speech (asking for specific items) and arithmetic (paying and checking change).

The attempt to group the courses on offer into discrete categories should not cloud the enormous diversity among them. This diversity can be viewed from different angles. On the positive side, it may reflect the creativity and energy with which pioneers respond to emerging demands. It may also indicate the flexibility with which provision is adapted to particular local opportunities and constraints. On the negative side, it may be a function of the isolation, and even parochial atmosphere, within which much curriculum development is conducted. There are no examination syllabuses nor vocational requirements to guide curriculum content and introduce some measure of uniformity. The general goal of 'preparation for adult life' can be interpreted in many ways. With the exception of Cheshire, described above by Eunice Barnett, and ILEA, most provision has been established in a relatively ad hoc way. Most college and institute curricula have been devised independently of each other. While it can be argued that curricula should be established on an individual basis, to maximise both staff commitment and local relevance and to allow for the possibility of negotiating learning contracts with students, there is no good reason for ignoring the relevant experience of colleagues elsewhere. It is not necessary to keep reinventing the wheel or to repeat the mistakes of others.

In practical terms, this suggests that there is a need of a mechanism for promoting collaboration on curriculum development. Although there is some contact between staff from different institutions during conferences and courses, this is usually in the context of the organisation of provision rather than the process of curriculum development. At the lowest level, information on curricular practice should be collected and made available. The present exercise is a first step in this direction – but no more than that. Beyond this there is need to test out curriculum frameworks by evaluating them in practice and disseminating the findings of evaluation exercises.

A further reason why the content of courses varied so much lies in the approach to curriculum development. Two strongly contrasting approaches are implied in the papers by John Varley and Edward Whelan et al respectively. Whelan et al present a 'complete curriculum' whose content is based on an objectives approach and can be spelled out in precise detail. Extensive action research was carried out before the curriculum was specified. When that was done however, the objectives, teaching packages and assessment procedures which comprised the curriculum were laid down – and

were in widespread use in many institutions. Varley's approach, based on notions of fresh start and open-ended response to individuals, is quite different from this. For him, prescriptive teaching to pre-specified objectives is less important than motivating students to 'use their heads' and equipping them to deal with new situations.

Most of the examples of curriculum referred to above probably lie somewhere between these two. The point in drawing attention to this range is not to argue for one or other approach but to highlight the complexity of the process of curriculum development, which in turn may explain why progress must needs be halting. What is taught and how it is taught depend on the views held on the nature of knowledge, the purpose of education and the relationship between teacher and taught. It is easy to dismiss these as abstract philosophical questions that have no bearing on practice. Nothing could be further from the truth however. The way in which provision is set up and run implies a particular view of knowledge and of education. Whether they realise it or not, practitioners do answer these questions in the detail of the provision they make, and there can be no doubt but that different answers make for significant differences in practice.

INTEGRATION

The principle of integration has provided a major stimulus to developments in educational and other services for groups with special needs. As noted in the Introduction, it is not a simple concept and its achievement has to be sought at many levels. At the most basic level, 'locational' integration was relatively easily achieved. Most colleges and institutes making provision were able to do so within mainstream accommodation. Students had unrestricted access to common room and other facilities, and indeed were often assisted in this regard by other students. There was a degree of social interaction, usually centred on the use of common facilities. Casual acceptance seemed to be the norm, with some adult students especially developing a consequent interest in mental handicap. Integration in the sense of shared classroom learning was relatively rare, though there were instances of it in both FE and adult education sectors. Penny Willis has described what can be achieved in adult education classes through the use of volunteers in practical subjects.

The opportunity for social interaction with 'normal' peers was a major feature of both college and adult education provision. While the opportunities were not always taken up, these two sectors have an advantage over special schools and many adult training centres in being able to set up social interaction in a natural way. This is not to say that colleges or adult education institutes are totally representative of the wider community – clearly they are not – but the opportunities and forms of social exchange they permit are similar in many ways to what students will experience in the world outside. Practising newly acquired social skills is particularly important for people with

severe learning difficulties. Many independence skills are for them social skills and must be acquired and consolidated through social interaction. So the corridor and the canteen become extensions of the classroom: the formal instruction given in the latter paves the way for practical learning and reinforcement in the former.

Integration is fundamentally about opening up opportunities to people who have hitherto been excluded from them. This entails looking beyond the individual social interaction and teaching situation. Personal encounters are important and must not be ignored but they do take place within a context of more general attitudes and structures which affect what happens at the personal level in significant ways. It is likely that many staff share the unease and fear that mentally handicapped people evoke in the population at large. Even when this is not the case, staff attitudes can impose limitations in other ways. In his account of provision in Southwark Chris Lloyd refers to the 'barriers to full participation in Adult Education' that providers create. Professionals know what is best and tend to shape provision in terms of what they prefer to give rather than what clients desire. This way of thinking has a paternalism associated with it that not only works against the best interests of students but can also make a mockery of some so-called integration. There is little use in integrated pottery classes for people who cannot stand pottery!

At a more serious level, this suggests a need to scrutinise the barriers in our thinking and attitudes and to question the structures of provision erected on them. Part of the Southwark response has been to recognise that the students have a legitimate view of their own learning needs and ability to contribute and then to create ways in which they can articulate what they want. This entails a view of students 'as individuals who can work towards their own solutions, be they educational, personal or political, and not as class groups on whom we impose a set of values and solutions which are in grave danger of being totally irrelevant'. This points to a rationale for educational provision where integration becomes a positive educational principle. Integration in the sense of removing restrictions yields place to integration in the sense of giving each student the regard due to all learners. If students with severe learning difficulties are accorded respect *as learners* and are assisted toward taking responsibility for their own learning, then there can be a real prospect that they will be integrated into both society and learning communities in authentic ways.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents of children with severe learning difficulties often have close links with the providers of education while their children are at school. Many special schools indeed pride themselves on their home/school links, seeking to involve parents in their children's education in addition to keeping them informed about it. It should be noted too that many of these parents have been accustomed to extensive contact with medical and paramedical authorities.

This contrasts sharply with the situation obtaining after school. The survey findings show that few parents had contact with college or institute staff. Such contact as there was took place in the context of full-time FE courses, and even here it might be limited to twice yearly meetings. There were exceptions, such as the commitment to parent workshops and general parent support described by Jenny Wilson, but these were few in number. Various explanations could be offered for the low level of contact: lack of a tradition of home liaison in the FE sector; age of students which meant that they were perceived less as children and more as emerging adults independent of their parents; and the fact that some provision was only recently established and staff had yet to 'get round' to parents.

Whatever the reasons, the absence of liaison with parents is to be regretted in terms both of decision-making and of the running of educational programmes. Major decisions affecting the young person's life are taken in the immediate post-school period; in order to be involved in these parents must be informed on the educational options available and understand the implications for their child's future. When educational programmes are geared toward practical independence – as many are – it is important that parents appreciate what is being done and provide appropriate reinforcement. Staff can waste effort in teaching people to make tea or bake bread if they are never allowed to do so at home. While students are indeed young adults many continue to live at home in the care of their parents. The home is a principal arena in which independence skills are practised and parents can contribute a great deal to the content and running of educational courses if staff establish the means for them to do so.

THE FUTURE

While it is encouraging to be able to report on the diversity of educational initiatives for people with severe learning difficulties, it must be realised that the amount of provision is actually quite small. It is also purely local in character so that access to it depends on geographical location. Most FE colleges and adult education institutes do not at the moment see a role for themselves in providing for students with severe learning difficulties. This is clearly unsatisfactory in the light of the twin considerations of need and opportunity: young people and adults with severe learning difficulties need better access to educational opportunities, while colleges and adult education institutes are well placed to provide such access. None of the institutions contacted in the course of the study reported undue difficulty in establishing its provision, and there would seem to be no good reason in principle why many of the initiatives described could not be replicated on a wide scale.

It is far from certain however that educational provision for young people and adults with severe learning difficulties will develop adequately and become available to all those likely to benefit from it. Whether or not it will develop,

and the way in which it develops, depend on various factors. Some of these are relatively clear, in concept at least if not in achievement: adequate resourcing; developments in curriculum planning and dissemination; opportunities for staff development; changes in the prevailing understanding of mental handicap and attitudes toward people with learning difficulties. Other factors that although less clearcut in their implications need to be considered include the emerging applications of new technology and the involvement of parents and the community.

Over and above these are two further factors that are of paramount importance in inhibiting or promoting the growth of provision, viz policy decisions, and information on existing practice. A major obstacle to progress is the absence of clear policy guidelines. Education for members of this group is provided variously in special schools, FE colleges, adult education institutes, hospitals, residential settings, adult training centres and social education centres. There may be good historical and practical reasons for this variety, but it does seem to reflect the unco-ordinated development of provision rather than a necessary flexibility in the face of individual needs. In the case of 16-19 year olds where the main growth in provision has been in the special school sector, Seamus Hegarty has pointed out that this is not necessarily for educational reasons. More generally, different sectors are making provision in a relatively unco-ordinated way, often without reference to or knowledge of what is going on in related sectors. This is neither sensible nor cost effective. Pragmatic considerations must not be ignored especially in times of budgetary restraint, and existing patterns of provision cannot be set aside overnight. This is not a valid reason however for not establishing a policy on provision for this group. In the absence of policy pragmatism rules and progress depends on the efforts of individuals. By contrast a well-formulated policy statement not only reduces the reliance on particular individuals but provides for the orderly expansion of the provision, relating the different sectors to each other in a coherent way and ensuring that resources and needs are matched efficiently.

The importance of collecting and disseminating information on existing practice has been signalled already in relation to curriculum development. There is currently great interest in developing educational provision for people with severe learning difficulties. The policy decisions which are critical to tapping the necessary resources for this are not made in a vacuum. In particular, knowledge of what is already happening can be an important stimulus both to individual initiative and to policy formulation. Apart from the widespread unease with which many view mentally handicapped people, providers of education tend to make extremely limited assumptions as to what they can achieve. This inhibits the development of educational provision – if they can not learn, why expend resources in trying to teach them?

One of the most effective means of combating this ignorance is to present examples of actual working practice. This necessitates a better base of information on existing practice and means of disseminating it. For the 16-19

year old group, there is need of a detailed investigation of provision, looking at the relative advantages and disadvantages of school and FE in terms of resources, curriculum, staff development and the promotion of independence. Likewise for older people, empirical evidence on the different forms of educational provision should be collected and analysed. This information would then provide a basis for formulating policy that would guide those who have started to make provision and stimulate those who have yet to begin.

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